This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

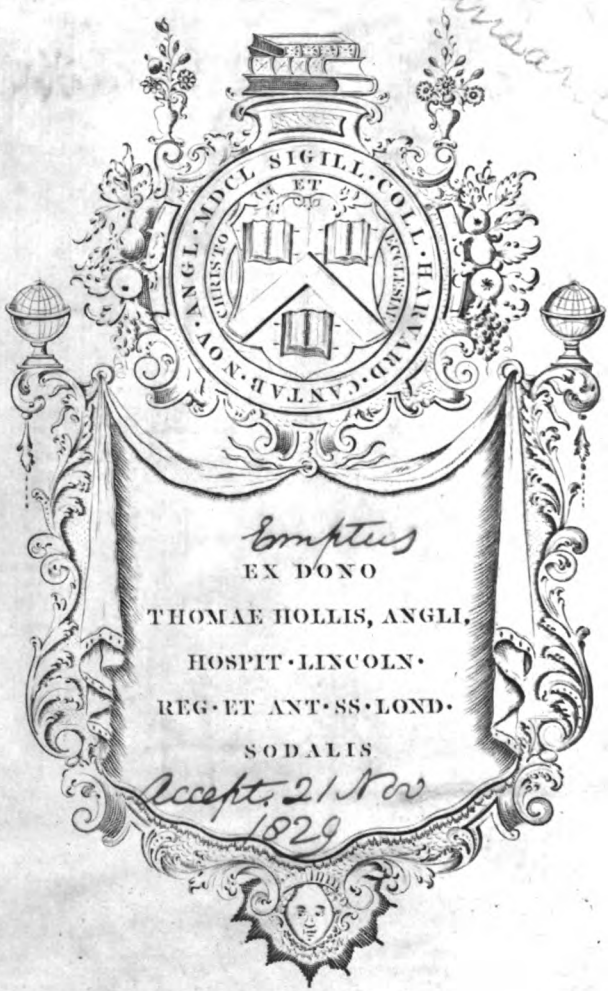
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Brit Doc 9000.80

Bd May 1901



Emptus
EX DONO
THOMAE HOLLIS, ANGLI,
HOSPIT · LINCOLN ·
REG · ET ANT · SS · LOND ·
SODALIS
Accept. 21 Nov
1829

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

Parliamentary History

OF

ENGLAND,

FROM

THE EARLIEST PERIOD

TO

THE YEAR

1803.

FROM WHICH LAST-MENTIONED EPOCH IT IS CONTINUED DOWNWARDS IN THE WORK ENTITLED,

"HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES."

VOL. XXXVI.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD

FROM THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1801,

TO THE TWELFTH DAY OF AUGUST, 1803.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. C. HANSARD, PETERBOROUGH-COURT, FLEET-STREET:

FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME & BROWN; J. M. RICHARDSON; BLACK, KINGSBURY, PARBURY, & ALLEN; J. HATCHARD AND SON; J. RIDGWAY AND SONS; E. JEFFERY AND SON; J. BOOKER; RODWELL &MARTIN; BALDWIN, CRADOCK, & JOY; R. H. EVANS; BUDD & CALKIN; J. BOOTH; AND T. C. HANSARD.

1820.

Digitized by Google

Brit. Hist. 5
Brit Doc 9000.80
B. 12.3a

Digitized by Google

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TO

VOLUME XXXVI.

I. Proceedings and Debates in both Houses of Parliament.
II. Addresses.
III. King's Speeches.
IV. King's Messages.
V. Lists.
VI. Parliamentary Papers.
VII. Protests.
VIII. Persons filling the several High Offices in Church and State.
IX. Index of the Names of the several Speakers in both Houses of Parliament.

I. PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES IN BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

SECOND SESSION OF THE FIRST PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

1801. Page

Oct. 29. The King's Speech on Opening the Session 1
Debate in the Lords on the Address of Thanks 3
Debate in the Commons on the Address of Thanks 8
30. Vote of Thanks to Sir James Saumarez 28
Nov. 3. Debate in the Commons on the Preliminaries of Peace with France 29
4. Debate on the Same 85
8. Debate in the Lords on the Preliminaries of Peace with France 157
12. Vote of Thanks to the Navy and Army employed in the Expedition to Egypt 191
18. Debate in the Lords on the Convention with Russia 193
Debate in the Commons on the Convention with Russia 263
25. Debate on Sir William Pulteney's Motion for a Committee on the Trade between India and Europe 281
Dec. 16. Adjournment of both Houses 312

1802.

Feb. 9. Mr. Speaker Mitford resigns 314
10. Mr. Abbot chosen Speaker 315
15. The King's Message respecting the Civil List 321

Digitized by Google

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

		Page
Feb. 17.	Debate in the Commons on appointing a Committee to consider the Civil List Accounts.....	321
Mar. 3.	Debate in the Commons on the Army Estimates	332
4.	Debate on the Same	346
8.	Debate on the Same	350
5.	Debate in the Commons on the American Treaty Bill	351
16.	Debate in the Commons on the State of the Corn Trade between Great Britain and Ireland	360
	Mr. Fox's Motion for a New Writ for Tavistock—Character of the Duke of Bedford	364
29.	Debate in the Commons on the Arrears of the Civil List	372
	Debate in the Lords on the King's Message respecting the Civil List	401
31.	Debate in the Commons on Mr. Manners Sutton's Motion relative to the Revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall	406
Apr. 2.	Mr. Canning's Motion for Papers respecting the Island of Trinidad	442
5.	Debate in the Commons on the Budget	445
6.	Vote of Thanks to the Army and Navy	462
7.	Debate in the Commons on the Clergy Non-Residence Bill	463
12.	Debate in the Commons on Sir Francis Burdett's Motion for an Inquiry into the Conduct of the late Administration	492
	Debate in the Commons on the Militia Bill	535
9.	Debate in the Commons on the Bank Restriction Continuance Bill	540
21.	Debate on the Same	547
27.	Debate in the Commons on the Imports and Exports Duties Bill	548
May 3.	Debate in the Commons on Mr. Windham's Motion for appointing a Day to consider the Definitive Treaty of Peace	565
4.	Debate in the Lords on Lord Grenville's Motion for appointing a Day to consider the Definitive Treaty of Peace	587
7.	Debate in the Commons on Mr. Nicholls's Motion for an Address respecting the Removal of Mr. Pitt	597
4.	Debate in the Commons on the Yeomanry and Volunteer Corps Offers of Service Bill	655
5.	Debates in both Houses on Motions for Papers relative to the Treaty of Peace with France	659
6.	Debates on the Same	668
7.	Debates on the Same	671
12.	Debates on the Same	674
13.	Debate in the Lords on the Definitive Treaty of Peace	686
	Debate in the Commons on the Definitive Treaty of Peace	739
14.	Debate in the Commons on the Same	778
10.	Claims of the Prince of Wales	828
24.	Debate in the Commons on the Bull-baiting Bill	829
27.	Debate in the Commons on Mr. Canning's Motion respecting the Cultivation of the Island of Trinidad	854
31.	Debate in the Commons on the Clergy Non-Residence Bill	882
Apr. 14.	Debate in the Commons on the National Debt Reduction Bill	889
May 17.	Debate on the Same	891

Digitized by Google

		Page
June 3.	Debate in the Commons on the National Debt Reduction Bill..	892
17.	Mr. Tierney's Finance Resolutions	898
25.	Mr. Chancellor Addington's Finance Resolutions.....	903
28.	The Speaker's Speech to the King on presenting the Money Bills.....	911
	The King's Speech at the Close of the Session.....	913

FIRST SESSION OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

1802.

Nov. 16.	Meeting of the New Parliament	914
	Mr. Abbot chosen Speaker.....	914
	List of the House of Commons	919
23.	The King's Speech on Opening the Session	934
	Debate in the Lords on the Address of Thanks	935
	Debate in the Commons on the Address of Thanks	947
24.	Debate on the Same	989
Dec. 2.	Debate in the Commons on the Navy Estimates	1034
8.	Debate in the Commons on the Army Estimates	1044
9.	Debate on the Same.....	1097
10.	Debate in the Commons on the Budget	1115
13.	Debate in the Lords on the Malt Duty Bill	1132
15.	Debate on the Same	1133
13.	Debate in the Commons on the Naval Commissioners Bill	1139
17.	Debate on the Same	1140
18.	Debate on the Same	1141
21.	Debate in the Lords on the Naval Commissioners Bill	1144
22.	Debate on the Same	1146

1803.

Feb. 7.	Debate in the Commons on the Bank Restriction Bill	1147
12.	Debate on the Same	1155
22.	Debate in the Lords on the Bank Restriction Bill.....	1156
16.	The King's Message respecting the Situation of the Prince of Wales	1162
Mar. 8.	The King's Message respecting Military Preparations in the Ports of France and Holland.....	1162
9.	Debate in the Commons on the King's Message respecting Military Preparations in the Ports of France and Holland	1163
	Debate in the Lords on the King's Message respecting the Military Preparations in the Ports of France	1170
10.	The King's Message for calling out the Militia	1173
11.	Debate in the Commons on Voting an Additional Number of Seamen	1174
23.	Debate in the Commons on the King's Message respecting the Situation of the Prince of Wales	1197
28.	Communication from the Prince of Wales to the Commons.....	1209
Mar. 4.	Debate in the Commons on Mr. Calcraft's Motion respecting certain Claims on the Prince of Wales	1210

Digitized by Google

		Page
Mar. 16.	Debate in the Commons on the Nottingham Election Bill	1230
Apr. 20.	Debate on the Same	1232
29.	Debate on the Same	1234
May 3.	Debate on the Same	1241
Mar. 25.	Proceedings against James Trotter for Contempt of the Orders of the House	1242
28.	The Same	1242
Apr. 4.	The Same	1245
Mar. 28.	Lord Ellenborough's Maiming and Wounding Bill	1245
May 3.	Debate in the Lords on the Irish Bank Restriction Bill	1247
5.	Debate on the Same	1248
13.	Debate in the Lords on Lord King's Motion respecting the Financial State of the Country	1248
16.	The King's Message relative to the Termination of the Discussions with France	1258
18.	Papers relative to the Discussions with France	1259
23.	Debate in the Commons on the King's Message relative to the Termination of the Discussions with France	1385
24.	Debate on the Same	1408
25.	Debate on the Same	1491
23.	Debate in the Lords on the King's Message relative to the Termination of the Discussions with France	1493
25.	The King's Message relative to calling out the Militia	1514
Apr. 6.	Debate in the Commons on the Spiritual Persons Relief Bill	1514
May 26.	Debate on the Same	1515
27.	Debate in the Commons on Mr. Fox's Motion respecting the Mediation of Russia	1517
June 3.	Debate in the Commons on Mr. Patten's Motion relative to the Conduct of Ministers	1533
2.	Debate in the Lords on the Conduct of Ministers	1571
6.	Debate in the Commons on the Army Estimates	1573
10.	Debate in the Lords on the Spiritual Persons Relief Bill	1579
13.	Debate in the Commons on the Budget	1594
17.	The King's Message respecting the Batavian Republic	1602
18.	The King's Message relative to the Defence of the Country	1602
20.	Debate in the Commons on the King's Message relative to the Defence of the Country	1603
23.	Debate in the Commons on the Additional Force Bill	1621
July 18.	Debate in the Commons on the Military Service Bill	1624
22.	Debate on the Same	1647
5.	Debate in the Commons on the Property Duty Bill	1662
13.	Debate on the Same	1664
14.	Debate on the Same	1668
21.	Debate in the Commons on the King's Message respecting the House of Orange	1671
28.	Debate in the Commons on the King's Message relative to the Rebellion in Ireland	1672
Aug. 2.	Debate in the Commons on Colonel Craufurd's Motion relative to the Defence of the Country	1680
10.	Debate in the Commons on Mr. Sheridan's Motion for a Vote of Thanks to the Volunteers	1692

Digitized by Google

1803. Page

May 11. Debate in the Commons on Mr. Hutchinson's Motion respecting the State of Ireland 1703
12. The Speaker's Speech to the King on presenting the Money Bills 1712
The King's Speech at the Close of the Session 1714

II. ADDRESSES.

1801. Oct. 29. Address of the Lords on the King's Speech at the Opening of the Session 5
- - - - - of the Commons on the King's Speech at the Opening of the Session 9
Nov. 3. - - - - - of the Commons on the Preliminary Articles of Peace with France ..... 31.
- - - - - of the Lords on the Preliminary Articles of Peace with France 159
13. - - - - - of the Lords on the Convention with Russia.. 197
- - - - - of the Commons on the Convention with Russia 263
1802. May 13. - - - - - of the Lords on the Definitive Treaty of Peace 697
- - - - - of the Commons on the Definitive Treaty of Peace 754, 769
1803. May 23. - - - - - of the Commons on the King's Message relative to the Discussions with France 1386

III. KING'S SPEECHES.

1801. Oct. 29. King's Speech on Opening the Session 1
1802. June 28. - - - - - - - - at the Close of the Session..... 913
Nov. 29. - - - - - - - - on Opening the Session 934
1803. Aug. 12. - - - - - - - - at the Close of the Session..... 1714

IV. KING'S MESSAGES.

1802. Feb. 15. King's Message respecting the Civil List 321
1803. 16. - - - - - - - - - respecting the Situation of the Prince of Wales 1162
Mar. 8. - - - - - - - - - respecting Military Preparations in the Ports of France and Holland ... 1162
10. - - - - - - - - - for calling out the Militia 1173
May 16. - - - - - - - - - relative to the Termination of the Discussions with France 1258
25. - - - - - - - - - relative to calling out the Supplementary Militia 1514
June 17. - - - - - - - - - relative to the Batavian Republic ... 1602
18. - - - - - - - - - relative to the Defence of the Country 1602

Digitized by Google

			Page
1802.	July 21.	KING'S MESSAGE respecting the House of Orange.....	1670
	28.	- - - - - - - - - relative to the Rebellion in Ireland ..	1671

V. LISTS.

1801.	Nov. 9.	LIST of the Minority in the House of Lords on the Address upon the Preliminary Articles of Peace with France	191
1802.	Mar. 31.	- - - of the Minority in the House of Commons on Mr. Mannera Sutton's Motion relative to the Revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall	441
	May 7.	- - - of the Minority in the House of Commons on Mr. Nicholls's Motion for an Address respecting the Removal of Mr. Pitt	655
	13.	- - - of the Minority in the House of Lords on the Address upon the Definitive Treaty of Peace ...	738
	14.	- - - of the Minority in the House of Commons on the Address upon the Definitive Treaty of Peace ...	828
	Nov. 16.	- - - of the Members of the House of Commons	919
1803.	Mar. 4.	- - - of the Minority in the House of Commons on Mr. Calcraft's Motion respecting certain Claims on the Prince of Wales.....	1228
	May 24.	- - - of the Minority in the House of Commons on the King's Message relative to the Discussions with France	1491
	23.	- - - of the Minority in the House of Lords on the King's Message relative to the Discussions with France	1514

VI. PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.

1801.	Oct. 30.	Convention between his Britannic Majesty and the Emperor of Russia, signed at St. Petersburgh the 5-17th June 1801	18
		Preliminary Articles of Peace between his Majesty and the French Republic; signed at London the 1st of October 1801	25
	Nov. 24.	Treaty of Alliance between his Majesty and the Ottoman Porte; signed at Constantinople, Jan. 5, 1799..	309
1802.	Apr. 29.	Definitive Treaty of Peace between his Britannic Majesty and the French Republic, his Catholic Majesty, and the Batavian Republic; signed at Amiens the 27th of March 1802	557
	June 17.	Copy of Mr. Tierney's Finance Resolutions	898
	25.	Copy of Mr. Chancellor Addington's Finance Resolutions	903
1803.	Feb. 28.	Communication from the Prince of Wales to the Commons	1209
	18.	Papers relative to the Discussions with France	1250
		Declaration relative to the Termination of the Discussions with France; dated Westminster, May 18th, 1803	1377

Digitized by Google

VII. PROTESTS.

			Page
1802.	Mar. 29.	PROTEST against the Address on the King's Message respecting the Civil List.....	406
	Dec. 15.	- - - - - against the Malt Duty Bill	1137

VIII. PERSONS FILLING THE SEVERAL HIGH OFFICES IN CHURCH AND STATE, FROM OCT. 29, 1801, TO AUG. 12, 1803.

ARCHBISHOPS.

1783.	Archbishop of Canterbury.....	John Moore.
1779.	- - - - - - - - York	William Markham.

BISHOPS.

1796.	Bishop of St. Asaph	Lewis Bagot.
1802.	- - - - -	Samuel Horsley.
1800.	- - - - - Bangor.....	William Cleaver.
1774.	- - - - - Bath and Wells	Charles Moss.
1802.	- - - - -	Richard Beadon.
1797.	- - - - - Bristol	F. H. W. Cornwall.
1797.	- - - - - Chichester	Charles Buckner.
1781.	- - - - - Coventry and Litchfield	Hon. James Cornwallis.
1800.	- - - - - St. David's	Lord George Murray.
1781.	- - - - - Ely	Hon. James Yorke.
1797.	- - - - - Exeter.....	Henry Reginald Courtenay.
1802.	- - - - - Gloucester	George Isaac Huntingford.
1788.	- - - - - Hereford	John Butler.
1782.	- - - - - Landaff	Richard Watson.
1787.	- - - - - Lincoln	George Pretyman Tomline.
1787.	- - - - - London	Beilby Porteus.
1792.	- - - - - Norwich	Charles Manners Sutton.
1799.	- - - - - Oxford.....	John Randolph.
1794.	- - - - - Peterborough	Spencer Madan.
1793.	- - - - - Rochester	Samuel Horsley.
1802.	- - - - -	Thomas Dampier.
1791.	- - - - - Salisbury.....	John Douglas.
1781.	- - - - - Winchester.....	Brownlow North.
1781.	- - - - - Worcester	Richard Hurd.
1791.	- - - - - Carlisle	Hon. Edward Vernon.
1800.	- - - - - Chester	Henry William Majendie.
1791.	- - - - - Durham	Hon. Shute Barrington.

Digitized by Google

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

1801. Apr. 14. John, Lord Eldon.

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL.

1801. July 20. William Henry, Duke of Portland.

LORD PRIVY SEAL.

1798. Feb. 14. John, Earl of Westmorland.

PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES OF STATE.

Home Department.

1801. July 30. Thomas, Lord Pelham.

Foreign Department.

1801. Feb. Robert Banks, Lord Hawkesbury. Afterwards Earl of Liverpool.

Department of War and the Colonies.

1801. March. Robert, Lord Hobart. Afterwards Earl of Buckinghamshire.

SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

1801. Feb. 11. Sir John Mitford, knt. Afterwards Lord Redesdale.
1802. Feb. 10. Charles Abbot. Afterwards Lord Colchester.

COMMISSIONERS FOR EXECUTING THE OFFICE OF LORD HIGH TREASURER OF GREAT BRITAIN.

1801. Mar. 7. The Right Hon. Henry Addington; and Chancellor of the Exchequer.
John Smyth, esq.
Charles Small Pybus, esq.
Lord George Thynne.
Nicholas Bond, esq.

1802. July The Right Hon. Henry Addington; and Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Charles Small Pybus, esq.
Lord George Thynne.
Nathaniel Bond, esq.
Hiley Addington, esq.

MASTER OF THE ROLLS.

1801. May 30. Sir William Grant, knt.

ATTORNEYS GENERAL,

1801. Feb. 21. Sir Edward Law, knt. Afterwards Lord Ellenborough.
1802. April Hon. Spencer Perceval.

Digitized by Google

SOLICITORS GENERAL.

1801.		Hon. Spencer Perceval.
1802.	April	Thomas Manners Sutton.

LORD ADVOCATE OF SCOTLAND.

1801.		Charles Hope, esq.

SECRETARY AT WAR.

1801.	Feb.	Right Hon. Charles Yorke.

IX. INDEX OF THE NAMES OF THE SEVERAL SPEAKERS IN BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, FROM OCT. 29, 1801, TO AUG. 12, 1803.

Abbot Charles [The Speaker. In 1817, created Baron Colchester] 319, 347, 911, 918, 1712.
Abercorn, Marquis of, 938.
Addington, Right Hon. Henry [Chancellor of the Exchequer] 15, 83, 156, 291, 321, 347, 348, 349, 350, 358, 360, 372, 413, 445, 456, 547, 550, 577, 650, 657, 667, 671, 808, 876, 885, 889, 894, 903, 983, 1030, 1037, 1096, 1110, 1115, 1140, 1144, 1147, 1155, 1163, 1178, 1198, 1204, 1217, 1244, 1487, 1556, 1578, 1594, 1623, 1646, 1663, 1667, 1668, 1671, 1672, 1674, 1680, 1692, 1710.
Alexander, Henry, 534.
Arden, Lord, 935.
Archdall, M. 530, 1053.
Asaph, Bishop of [Dr. Horsley] 1579.
Attorney General; *see* Sir Edward Law; *see also* Perceval.
Auckland, [William Eden] Lord, 597, 661, 703, 1159, 1172, 1249.

Babington, Thomas, 155.
Bankes, Henry, 56, 892, 1052, 1153, 1155, 1208, 1492.
Baker, William, 151, 316, 340.
Baring, Sir Francis, 299, 1154.
Bastard, J. P. 1537.
Bedford, Duke of, 7, 177.
Belgrave, Viscount [afterwards Earl Grosvenor], 532, 604.
Best, Mr. Serjeant, 1424.
Bolton, Lord, 3.
Bond, Nicholas, 807, 1234, 1237.
Bouverie, W. 534.
Boyd, Walter, 546, 897.
Browne, Isaac Hawkins, 1108, 1230, 1232, 1234, 1538.
Buckingham, [George Grenville Nugent Temple] Marquis of, 186.
Burdett, Sir Francis, 439, 493, 1008, 1106, 1516, 1642. 1671, 1690.
Burdon, Rowland, 1215.
Burroughs, William, 1186.
Buxton, Sir Robert, 534, 1213.

Calcraft, John, 652, 1109, 1210, 1621, 1692.
Camden, Earl, 730.
Canning, George, 442, 854, 881, 959, 1034, 1041, 1070, 1140, 1169, 1190, 1223, 1424, 1564, 1671.
Carlisle, [Frederick Howard] Earl of, 659, 939, 1135.
Carnarvon [Henry Herbert] Earl of, 187, 712, 1572.
Cartwright, W. 620, 949, 1054, 1213.
Carysfort, Lord, 946.
Castlereagh, Viscount, 54, 340, 555, 652, 781, 919, 987, 1115, 1203, 1227, 1623, 1644, 1708.
Cathcart, Lord, 197.
Cavendish, Lord George, 318.
Chancellor of the Exchequer, *see* Addington.
Clarence, H. R. H. the Duke of, 161, 1501.
Combe, H. C. 1662.
Cornwallis, James, 336.
Corry, Isaac, 554.
Courtenay, John, 318, 841.
Craufurd, Colonel, 1647, 1680, 1703.
Cumberland, H. R. H. the Duke of, 1496.
Curwen, John Christian, 1213.
Curzon, Mr. 948.

Dallas, Robert, 1420.
Darnley, [John Bligh] Earl of, 193, 722, 1135.
Dawson, Richard, 152.
Dent, John, 347, 556, 854, 1179.
Dundas, Henry [afterwards Viscount Melville], 679, 774. *see* Melville.
Dundas, William, 304.
Dundas, Charles, 920.

Digitized by Google

Eldon, Lord [Lord Chancellor], 171, 256, 596, 724, 1133, 1134, 1136, 1145, 1146.
Ellenborough, Lord, 718, 1146, 1245, 1508, 1572.
Elford, William, 534.
Elliot, William, 146, 332, 661, 996, 1190, 1423, 1622, 1707.
Ellison, Richard, 154, 533.
Erskine, Hon. Thomas, [afterwards Lord Erskine] 278, 419, 616, 1211, 1222, 1387, 1663.

Fitzwilliam, Earl [William Wentworth Fitzwilliam], 183, 402, 1571, 1572.
Folkestone, Viscount, 755.
Fonblanque, John, 1549.
Foster, John, 382, 652.
Fox, Charles James, 11, 72, 320, 364, 382, 425, 610, 639, 951, 983, 1015, 1083, 1111, 1150, 1165, 1179, 1205, 1220, 1233, 1235, 1241, 1243, 1437, 1490, 1517, 1532, 1570, 1648, 1691.
Francis, Philip, 1174, 1681, 1702.
Frankland, W., 848.
Fuller, John Rose, 413, 1213.

Gascoyne, Isaac, 351, 544, 546, 844, 881, 996, 1698.
Geary, Sir William, 1215.
Glenbervie, Lord, 277, 652.
Gower, Lord Leveson, 86.
Grant, Sir William [Master of the Rolls], 315, 420, 796, 887.
Grenville, Lord [William Wyndham Grenville], 163, 200, 587, 688, 737, 940, 1034, 1133, 1136, 1160, 1171, 1252, 1511, 1572.
Grenville, Thomas, 48, 564, 666, 769, 986, 1097, 1245, 1408, 1550.
Grey Charles [afterwards Earl Grey], 267, 459, 610, 623, 826, 1240, 1408.
Grosvenor, Colonel, 844, 1222.
Gunning, Mr. 611.

Harrison, George, 1203.
Hartopp, Sir Edmund, 29.
Hawkesbury [Robert Banks Jenkinson] Lord 37, 269, 336, 355, 364, 436, 556, 564, 584, 633, 664, 756, 963, 988, 1034, 1040, 1160, 1153, 1166, 1186, 1226, 1525, 1562, 1641, 1663, 1671, 1674, 1703, 1706.
Henderson, Anthony, 1235.
Hill, Sir Richard, 829.
Hobart, Lord [afterwards Earl of Buckinghamshire], 189, 402, 674, 731, 946, 1133, 1170.
Hobhouse, Benjamin, 127, 626, 1492, 1547.
Holland, [Henry Richard Fox Vassal] 260, 402, 738.
Hutchinson, C. H. 1673, 1703, 1711.

Johnstone, George, 295, 1212, 1214.
Jones, T. T. 304, 462, 531, 543, 666.

Kensington, Lord, 1538.
King, Lord, 1156, 1245, 1249, 1507.
Kinnaird, Hon. Charles, 1141.
Knatchbull, Sir E. 656.

Lansdown [William Petty] Marquis of, 1505.
Lascelles, Henry, 85, 917, 1214, 1492.
Laurence, Dr. French, 144, 275, 341, 354, 400, 545, 556, 665, 674, 804, 1044, 1109 1141, 1674.
Law, Sir Edward [Attorney General] 345, 433, 1711, *see* Ellenborough.
Lee, Edward, 31.
Lefevre, Shaw, 1493.
Limerick, Earl of, 159, 1233, 1247, 1571,
London, Bishop of, [Dr. Beilby Porteus] 183.
Lord Chancellor, *see* Eldon.
Loxaine, Lord, 8.

Mainwaring, William, 462.
Maitland, General, 791, 1013, 1053, 1423.
Manning, William, 546.
Markham, Captain, 1040, 1199.
Martin, James, 17.
Master of the Rolls, *see* Sir W. Grant.
Melville, Lord, 1502, 1572.
Metcalf, T. T. 303.
Milbank, Sir Ralph, 413, 1203.
Mildmay, Sir Henry, 612.
Minto, Lord, 1137.
Moira, Earl of, *see* Rawdon.
Montrose, Duke of, 738.
Moore, Peter, 1239.
Morpeth, Viscount, 1033.
Mulgrave, [Henry Phipps] Lord, 175, 261, 701, 1502.

Nelson, Lord, 185, 262, 936, 1144.
Newbolt, Mr. 848.
Nicholls, John, 154, 330, 360, 437, 597.
Norfolk, Duke of, 699, 940, 1135, 1507.

Ormsby, William, 320.
Osborne, Lord Francis, 263.
Patten, Peter, 1533.
Peel, Sir Robert, 544, 552, 622, 1491.
Pelham, Lord, 162, 401, 595, 660, 700, 945, 1133, 1137, 1144, 1156, 1493.
Perceval, Spencer [Attorney General] 436, 888, 1043, 1489.
Pierrepont, Evelyn, 1233.
Pitt, Right Hon. William, 11, 57, 330, 395, 456, 583, 535, 669, 777, 892, 1387, 1528, 1560, 1578, 1622, 1642, 1657, 1664, 1668, 1670.
Pole, Wellesley, 630, 769.
Pulteney, Sir William, 681, 963, 1197, 1492.

Digitized by Google

Pytches, John, 950.

Rawdon, Lord, [Francis Rawdon Hastings, Earl of Moira in Ireland. In 1817 created Marquis of Hastings] 174, 405, 1157, 1171, 1252, 1509.
Richmond, Duke of, 731, 1505.
Robson, R. B. 346, 347, 348, 349, 350.
Rochester, Bishop of [Dr. Samuel Horsley], 178.
Romney, [Charles Marsham] Earl of, 157.
Rose, George, 1240.
Rosslyn, [Alexander Wedderburn] Earl of, 723, 1511.
Ryder, Dudley [afterwards Earl of Harrowby], 264, 1055.

Scott, Sir William, 280, 463, 889, 914, 1514.
Secretary at War, *see* Yorke.
Sheffield, Lord, 555, 1160.
Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, 17, 317, 437, 540, 817, 849, 1056, 1143, 1168, 1204, 1223, 1622, 1673, 1676, 1678, 1679, 1692, 1703.
Simeon, John, 882,
Smith, William, 651, 826, 848, 1663, 1664.
Smith, Sir Sidney, 1039.
Solicitor General, *see* Sutton.
Speaker, The; *see* Sir John Mitford; *see also* Abbot.
Spencer, [George John Spencer] Earl, 160, 671, 1152, 1154, 1170, 1511.
Stanhope, Spencer, 656, 1498,
Stanhope, Earl, 687.
Stanley, Colonel, 1197.
St. Vincent, Earl, 184.
Sturges, William, 277, 1040, 1140, 1142.
Suffolk, [John Howard,] Earl of, 1134.
Sutton, Manners, 322, 332, 406, 441. [Solicitor General] 1202.

Tarleton, B. 1053.
Taylor, Michael Angelo, 886.
Temple, Earl [afterwards Marquis of Buckingham], 17, 55, 268, 441, 536, 668, 794, 1012, 1052, 1142, 1539, 1711.
Thornton, Robert, 155.
Thornton, Henry, 609, 1155.
Thurlow, Lord, 596.
Tierney, George, 280, 305, 399, 435, 545, 548, 652, 825, 896, 898, 1149, 1215, 1242.
Trench, Hon. Mr. 947.
Turner, Sir G. P. 623.
Tyrwhitt, Thomas, 438, 828, 1691.

Vansittart, Nicholas, 349, 352.

Wallace, Thomas, 297.
Ward, Robert, 1142.
Warwick, Earl of, 175.
Westmeath, Lord, 163.
Westmorland, [John Fane,] Earl of, 184, 717, 1158.
Whitbread, Samuel, 452, 989, 1054, 1414.
Wilberforce, William, 140, 557, 610, 620, 845, 882, 989, 1082, 1398, 1702.
Windham, Right Hon. William, 12, 86, 337, 357, 565, 585, 671, 739, 831, 888, 971, 1027, 1093, 1113, 1167, 1489, 1574, 1606, 1623, 1630, 1673, 1676, 1678, 1679, 1698, 1709.
Wodehouse, Hon. John, 10, 623.
Wood, Mark, 152.
Wrottesley, Sir John, 949.
Wynn, Sir W. W. 1222.
Wynn, Charles Williams, 152, 808, 1549.

Yorke, Right Hon. Charles, [Secretary at War] 146, 332, 348, 535, 655, 1014, 1044, 1603, 1622, 1624, 1656, 1702.
Young, Sir William, 657, 778.

Digitized by Google

PARLIAMENTARY

Digitized by Google

Parliamentary History.

42 GEORGE THE THIRD, A. D. 1801.

SECOND SESSION
OF THE
FIRST PARLIAMENT
OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM
OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

THE King's Speech on Opening the Session.] October 29, 1801. His Majesty opened the Session with the following Speech to both Houses:

"My Lords and Gentlemen;

"I have the satisfaction to acquaint you, that the important negotiations, in which I was engaged at the close of the last session of parliament, are brought to a favourable conclusion. The differences with the Northern Powers have been adjusted by a convention with the emperor of Russia, to which the kings of Denmark and Sweden have expressed their readiness to accede. The essential rights for which we contended are thereby secured; and provision is made that the exercise of them shall be attended with as little molestation as possible to the subjects of the contracting parties.

"Preliminaries of peace have also been ratified between me and the French republic; and I trust that this important arrangement, whilst it manifests the justice and moderation of my views, will also be found conducive to the substantial interests of this country, and honourable to the British character:—Copies of these Papers shall be forthwith laid before you, and I earnestly hope that the transactions to which they refer will meet with the approbation of my parliament.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons;

"I have directed such estimates to be prepared for the various demands for the public service, as appear to me to be best adapted to the situation in which we are now placed. It is painful to me to reflect, that provision cannot be made for defraying the expenses which must unavoidably be continued, for a time, in different parts of the world, and for maintaining an adequate peace establishment, without large additional supplies. You may, however, be assured, that all possible attention shall be paid to such economical arrangements as may not be inconsistent with the great object of effectually providing for the security of all my dominions.

"My Lords and Gentlemen;

"I cannot sufficiently describe the gratification and comfort I derive from the relief, which the bounty of divine Providence has afforded to my people, by the abundant produce of the late harvest. In contemplating the situation of the country at this important conjuncture, it is impossible for me to refrain from expressing the deep sense I entertain of the temper and fortitude which have been manifested by all descriptions of my faithful subjects, under the various and complicated difficulties with which they have had to contend.

"The distinguished valour and eminent services of my forces by sea and land, which, at no period have been surpassed; the unprecedented exertions of the militia and fencibles, and the zeal and perseverance of the yeomanry and volunteer corps of cavalry and infantry, are entitled to my warmest acknowledgments; and I am persuaded that you will join with me in reflecting, with peculiar satisfaction, on the naval and military opera-

Digitized by Google

tions of the last campaign; and on the successful and glorious issue of the expedition to Egypt, which has been marked throughout by achievements, tending, in their consequences and by their example, to produce lasting advantages and honour to this country.

"It is my first wish, and most fervent prayer, that my people may experience the reward they have so well merited, in a full enjoyment of the blessings of peace, in a progressive increase of the national commerce, credit, and resources; and, above all, in the undisturbed possession of their religion, laws, and liberties, under the safeguard and protection of that constitution, which it has been the great object of all our efforts to preserve, and which it is our most sacred duty to transmit, unimpaired, to our descendants."

Debate in the Lords on the Address of Thanks.] His Majesty's Speech having been read from the woolsack, and afterwards by the clerk at the table,

Lord *Bolton* rose to call their lordships attention to the sentiments of paternal affection with which his majesty had announced the happy tidings of his having successfully adjusted the differences with the northern powers, and ratified preliminaries of peace with the French republic. These happy events had been brought about by the promptitude and alacrity with which his majesty's beneficent views for the welfare of his people had been seconded by the vigilance of his councils; the bravery and achievements of his forces by sea and land; and the zeal, perseverance and fortitude of every description of his faithful people. He should not at that moment go into the detail of the preliminaries of peace, which had been received with such universal marks of exultation throughout the country. The universal eagerness of joy with which the event was received, would be confirmed by a careful examination of the terms upon which it had been accomplished. The great leading features of the peace were known; and as the papers would be officially laid before them, he should content himself with glancing at a few topics, one of which only he should presume to press; and that was, the fitness of the time at which ministers had concluded the preliminaries of peace. They had chosen a moment for the negotiation when our resources were in their full vigour, and when the nation had distinguished its character by the firm, manly, and determined posture of preparation into which it had put itself on the menaces of an invasion. The negotiation was begun and the peace concluded, therefore, at a moment the most auspicious to the British character, when our resources were unimpaired, and our armies triumphant. It was not his purpose to trace the horrors of the French Revolution, from which every civilized mind must turn with disgust; he desired only to draw the eyes of all mankind to the present posture of the people who had brought upon themselves the mischief, as an instructive lesson to all other nations. After enduring for a series of years every possible misery, they had now come to a mere chance only of restoration to the blessings of a regulated system. He was far from defending the ancient monarchy of France; but every man of that country must look back with regret on the comparative freedom, security and happiness which he enjoyed under the monarchy. It was a grand and magnificent triumph for England to make a peace, when her navies and armies were every where conquerors, from the frozen seas of the north to the pillars of Hercules; and from Africa to the extremest shores of Asia and America. The feeling was rendered still more gratifying and exalted, when we made the triumphs of our heroes only accessory to the spirit of moderation which dictated our appeal to arms—when the unexampled achievements of that band of heroes who had rescued Egypt from its invaders, were made only to restore it to its rightful owner. But, while the sentiments of moderation which actuated his majesty's councils dignified the cause in which we had been engaged, what a security for the continuance of peace did not the possession of such navies and armies give to the nation! What a guarantee for the continuance of peace was the character of that army, and of that gallant commander, who, after achieving the most signal triumphs, showed that he possessed a quality even more splendid than heroism, modesty, which disclaimed all merit to himself, that he might heap it upon the tomb of his departed predecessor, and spread it over the ranks of his companions in arms! When he regarded the noble struggle which this country had made, unassisted and alone, it filled him with enthusiastic

Digitized by Google

admiration. Some of our allies had already made peace; some had been invaded by the enemy, and the integrity of Europe could no longer be preserved. The manner in which former negotiations had been carried on, and the demands made by the enemy on these occasions furnished another argument in favour of the present peace, by showing the difference between what had been at one time demanded, and since acceded to.—His lordship concluded with moving the following Address:

"Most Gracious Sovereign;—We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in parliament assembled, return your majesty our humble thanks for your majesty's most gracious speech from the throne.

"We acknowledge with gratitude your majesty's goodness in acquainting us that the important negotiation in which your majesty was engaged at the close of the last session, have been brought to a favourable conclusion; and we beg leave to express to your majesty our satisfaction that the difficulties with the northern powers have been adjusted by a convention with the Emperor of Russia, to which the kings of Denmark and Sweden have expressed their readiness to accede; and that preliminaries of peace have also been ratified between your majesty and the French republic.

"We return your majesty our sincere thanks for the communications which your majesty has been pleased to direct to be laid before us; and we beg leave to assure your majesty, that we will, with the utmost diligence, take them into our most serious consideration.

"While we most cordially rejoice with your majesty in the relief which the bounty of Divine Providence has afforded to your majesty's people by the abundant produce of the late harvest; we at the same time beg leave to testify our most cordial concurrence in the sentiments which your majesty has been pleased to express, of the temper and fortitude which have been manifested by all descriptions of your majesty's subjects, under the various and complicated difficulties with which they have had to contend.

"We reflect with the greatest pride and exultation, on the distinguished valour and eminent services of your majesty's forces by sea and land, which at no period have been surpassed; we have witnessed, with most heartfelt satisfaction, the unprecedented exertions of the militia and fencibles, and the zeal and perseverance of the yeomanry and volunteer corps of cavalry and infantry; and we most cordially join with your majesty in the sentiments so justly due to the naval and military operations of the last campaign, and to the successful and glorious issue of the expedition to Egypt, which has been marked throughout by achievements which, in their consequences, and by their example, tend to produce lasting advantage and honour to this country.

"We beg leave to testify to your majesty our most grateful sense of your majesty's uniform concern and regard for the welfare of your people; and to declare the unfeigned earnestness with which we join with your majesty in most fervent prayer that your majesty's people may experience the reward they have so well merited, in a full enjoyment of the blessings of peace, in a progressive increase of the national commerce, credit, and resources, and, above all, in the undisturbed possession of their religion, laws, and liberties, under the safeguard and protection of that constitution, which it has been the great object of all our efforts to preserve, and which it is our most sacred duty and determined resolution to transmit unimpaired to our descendants."

Lord *Lilford* rose to second the address. He congratulated their lordships on the happy tidings that peace had been concluded with the French republic, an event which had diffused universal joy throughout the kingdom, and must impress their lordships with the same sentiments of exultation and pride; the more so as the event was not purchased by the humiliation of Great Britain, the sacrifice of any of her important interests, or the least danger to our happy constitution. The blessings that peace would necessarily bring with it must present themselves to the observation of every man. To prove the full extent of this, it was only necessary to look back to the melancholy situation in which we stood when parliament was last called together, and compare it with the alteration of circumstances that had since taken place. At the time to which he referred, every member cast his eyes around him with apprehension and alarm, and saw no prospect of an early cessation of hostilities. On the contrary, the war assumed an aspect of new terror, in consequence of the menaced interference of

Digitized by Google

the northern powers; while we had the gigantic force of France to contend with nearer home, and the fate of Egypt hung in suspense. Our domestic situation was, if possible, still more melancholy. Our beloved sovereign, afflicted with severe indisposition, and administration divided among themselves; government for some time in a state of inefficiency; the people threatened with all the horrors of an immediate famine, and reduced to the utmost distress, in consequence of the high price of provisions; and the country menaced with invasion. Let their lordships hold those well-grounded causes of alarm in their consideration, and looking at the present posture of our affairs both at home and abroad, ask themselves, if they had not reason to prostrate themselves before the God of Mercies with all humility, and pour forth songs of praise and thanksgiving? Owing to the vigilance of administration, supported by the vigorous exertions of our gallant officers by sea and land, we had been again put in possession of our maritime rights, and security had been obtained for our holding them, free from question or infringement, for the future. While every other country which had opposed the principles inseparable from revolutions, had either had its government subverted, or its rights more or less invaded and injured, this happy empire had safely stood the shock; the fabric of her constitution remained unimpaired, her religion unviolated, and her laws and liberties preserved. From abroad we had little to dread, and at home we could have nothing to fear from domestic enemies; since the few who might continue to act under the influence of the pernicious principles, that had so much endangered other countries, would find that they had nolonger any to aid and encourage their mischievous designs. Impressed with these sentiments, he cordially supported the Address.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, that the Address had his hearty concurrence. Indeed, if he could enter into any difference on the present occasion, it would have been with the noble lord who moved the Address, as to that part of his argument in which he laid so much stress on the fitness of the present time for the conclusion of peace; his own opinion being, that a fit time might have been found much earlier. He hoped that, as speedily as possible, the constitution, of which the people had been so long deprived, would be restored to them.

The Address was agreed to, *nem. dis.*

The King's Answer to the Lords' Address.] To the Address of the Lords his Majesty returned this Answer:

"My lords; I thank you for this dutiful and loyal Address: your conduct on this occasion, and your assurances of the attention you will give to those objects I have directed to be laid before you, are such as I expected from the wisdom and anxious zeal for the public interest, which have always guided your proceedings: nothing can be more grateful to my feelings than the sense you express of my desire to promote the welfare and happiness of my people."

Debate in the Commons on the Address of Thanks.] His majesty's Speech having been read from the Chair,

Lord *Lovaine* rose to move an Address of thanks. He was convinced, he said, that every member would concur with him in offering their acknowledgments to his majesty for his most gracious speech, and in expressing their exultation and gratitude for the happy consummation of that event which had restored tranquility to Europe; an event which, as it was viewed by the great majority of the kingdom with satisfaction, would, he hoped, give rise to the expression of but one sentiment on the part of its representatives —a sentiment of joy at the restoration of the blessings of peace, by a treaty highly beneficial to the nation. When the preliminaries should be laid before the House, he was persuaded it would appear that the terms were no way derogatory to British faith, or the expectations which British valour entitled us to form. Who could look, without exultation, at the state of the country, after a series of military and naval achievements which had never been exceeded? Every quarter of the globe had been the theatre of British valour. The successes that we had obtained during the war, and particularly during the last year, would remain eternal monuments to future ages, that we had attempted no achievement, by the accomplishment of which we had not added to the character of the country. The restoration of Egypt to its ancient possessors was a circumstance which reflected the highest lustre on the individuals who had effected it, and the wisdom of the councils by which it had been planned. To his majesty's ministers were due the ap-

Digitized by Google

plause and gratitude of the country, for the prudence with which they had carried on the negotiations, and the unexampled secrecy with which they had concluded them. He was persuaded that the House would concur in the satisfaction expressed by his majesty at the convention concluded with the Powers of the North. The termination of the difficulties which had unhappily subsisted had been effected, by providing against the recurrence of the abuses which had taken place in the exercise of those rights which constituted the basis of our maritime greatness. The luxuriant harvest with which the country had been last year blessed, would, he trusted, not prevent the House from being actuated by the conviction, that economy in the consumption of its produce was the only mode of guarding against the danger of scarcity in future. When he looked forward to the blessings of peace, he could not help attributing the praise of it to those ministers who, during a period fraught with every danger, had, by the vigour of their measures, protected the country, not only from the avowed attempt of its foreign enemies, but from the secret machinations of its internal foes. He should conclude by moving, "That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, to return his majesty the thanks of this House, for his most gracious speech from the throne:—To assure his majesty that we learn with great satisfaction that the differences with the Northern Powers have been adjusted by a convention with the emperor of Russia, to which the kings of Denmark and Sweden have expressed their readiness to accede, and that preliminaries of peace have been ratified between his majesty and the French republic:—That we acknowledge his majesty's goodness in having been pleased to direct copies of these treaties to be laid before us, and to assure his majesty that we shall not fail to apply our immediate attention to the important transactions to which they relate:—That we are fully sensible of the paternal solicitude which leads his majesty to regret the necessity of large additional supplies. But that while we sincerely participate in that sentiment, we feel the indispensable duty of providing for the expenses which must for a time be unavoidable in different parts of the world, and of maintaining an adequate establishment on the final restoration of peace:—That we shall be anxious for the adoption of all such economical arrangements as may not be inconsistent with the great object which his majesty has so justly at heart, of effectually providing for the security of all his majesty's dominions:—That we truly participate in the gratification which his majesty has so graciously been pleased to express at the relief which the bounty of Divine Providence has afforded to his people by the abundance of the late harvest; and we acknowledge with the utmost gratitude, his majesty's gracious acceptance and approbation of the proofs of that temper and fortitude which have been manifested by all descriptions of his subjects, under the various and complicated difficulties with which they have had to contend:—That we reflect with sentiments of just exultation on the distinguished valour and eminent services of his majesty's forces by sea and land, which at no period have been surpassed; and that we have contemplated with the utmost satisfaction the unprecedented exertions of the militia and fencibles, and the zeal and perseverance of the yeomanry and volunteer corps of cavalry and infantry:—That we most heartily congratulate his majesty on the naval and military operations of the last campaign, and in the glorious and successful issue of the expedition to Egypt, marked as it has been throughout by achievements which, in their consequences, and by their example, cannot fail to conduce to the lasting advantage and honour of this country:—That we cordially share in his majesty's earnest wishes that his subjects may enjoy in their full extent the returning blessings of peace, in the progressive increase of the national commerce, credit, and resources; and, above all, in the undisturbed possession of their religion, laws, and liberties, under the safeguard and protection of that constitution, which it has been the great object of all our efforts to preserve, and which it is our fixed determination, as it is our most sacred duty, to transmit unimpaired to our descendants."

Mr. *Wodehouse* said, he joined in the general joy expressed upon the subject of a treaty of peace with France, in which the security of the country was amply provided for, and its interests firmly maintained. He rejoiced at the convention with the Northern Powers, in which the rights of Britons were maintained with undeviating firmness. Every one must feel elated at the glorious termination of a war, which was not begun for

Digitized by Google

the purpose of gratifying the ambition, or extending the territories of Britain; but which she was compelled to commence for the purpose of preserving her dearest rights. He was convinced of the necessity of a considerable supply, which he had no doubt would be cheerfully voted. Gentlemen must be aware, that a much larger peace establishment would be necessary than had hitherto been known in this country, from the alteration which had taken place in the face of Europe. He was convinced, however, that nothing would be asked for by ministers, which was not absolutely necessary to the security of the kingdom. To our brilliant successes by sea and land, he must pay his tribute of admiration: they had been most glorious and unexampled. To one man, however, he more particularly yielded the palm of admiration: he alluded to the gallant Abercromby; to whose bravery, judgment, and skill, must peculiarly be ascribed those successes which immediately led to that happy termination of the war which we were now called upon to celebrate. The achievements of the British arms had immediately led to the happy event of peace, and ought to be regarded with every testimony of applause and approbation. Peculiar praise was also due to those who had seized the happy moment for negotiation, and who, without being elated by success, had founded upon it claims that at once united a proper dignity and a happy moderation. The advantages which would accrue to the people of England from the measures which had been pursued, were obvious. Their commerce would be enlarged, their interests benefited, and their prosperity and happiness materially increased.

Mr. *Fox* said, he wished it distinctly to be understood upon what ground he should that night give his vote. Whatever difference of opinion there might take place relative to the terms of the peace, or its general tenor, or the manner of concluding it, he most cordially and unequivocally joined in the general joy and exultation to which the conclusion of peace had given rise. He congratulated that House, and the country, on the happy event which had taken place, and which had called forth a general sentiment of applause. He only wished to add, that he should give his decided approbation of the address by his vote.

Mr. *Pitt* said, he rose to deliver, in a few words, his opinion in concurrence with what had already been delivered on the important subject now before the House, and upon which he was glad to have the prospect of unanimity, a thing which was not common even on the first day of a session. He said he would not enter at large into the transactions now before the House, and which his majesty had announced from the throne, either as to the pacification which had been concluded with the Northern Powers, or the signature of the preliminaries with France; when either of these topics, and particularly the latter, should be brought forward for discussion, he hoped he should be found to agree with the hon. gentleman who had just preceded him, and that they should both express their approbation of that measure, although it was an approbation which would proceed, perhaps, from different reasons. This was not the season for the regular discussion of either, and yet he was anxious to declare the outline of his sentiments on both these measures, which he saw, upon the whole, with great satisfaction; and he would add, that whatever criticism might be applied to inferior parts of these great transactions, or to whatever criticisms they might be liable, they were, on the whole, such as afforded matter of great joy to the country, and entitled the government which concluded them to esteem and thanks. There was another topic on which he would slightly touch—the termination of the war had been accompanied with honour to us; for it had given proofs of vigour and energy beyond any former war, and of achievements more splendid, if possible, than any which adorned our history before this period.

Mr. *Windham* said: Sir, it is a very painful task to me to declare my sentiments in opposition to those with whom I have long agreed. But as the address proposed to the House does not go to pledge us to any specific approbation of the measure of peace, it is not now my intention to enter into a consideration of the question of the terms; especially, as future opportunity will be presented, when I may state to the House those reasons upon which I found my disapprobation of them. It is not, therefore, my intention this day to give my negative to the proposed address, but to wait for the day of discussion, when I shall go more fully into the subject; at the same time wishing to be understood, that, in agreeing

Digitized by Google

to the motion of to-day, I do not feel myself pledged to support any future motions upon the subject. This point being secured, Sir, I should be inclined to leave my opinion, and the reasons which are to support it, to be stated in that debate which may be expected shortly to take place, if the declarations of opinions in favour of the peace did not seem to me to require similar declarations on the part of those who find themselves compelled to condemn it. Other reasons also make it necessary to say a word or two even in the present stage of the business. To dissent from any prevalent opinion, to be a solitary mourner in the midst of general rejoicing, to wear the face of sadness while the countenances of others glisten with joy; to be sunk in dejection and despondency, while others are animated with the most brilliant hopes, is to be in a state which every one must be anxious to explain, so far, at least, as to make known the general nature and character of such an extraordinary difference. The House has seen, and can perfectly understand that those who are united in feeling may, nevertheless, be perfectly opposite in sentiment. An instance, Sir, may be seen this very night: the hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Fox), and my right hon. friend near me, both agree in rejoicing and exulting in the present peace, though, I presume, on reasons widely different. It is my fortune, on the other hand, to agree with the hon. gentleman opposite in his opinions, but to differ from him wholly in his feelings. I do think, with him, that this is a glorious peace for France; but I nevertheless do not agree in feeling either with that hon. gentleman or my hon. friends. This, Sir, may serve to explain the cause of that diversity which I unhappily find between my own opinions and those more generally prevalent in the country. If I have not partaken in the rejoicings, it is because I have not been able to convince myself that there are any real or solid causes for rejoicing: it is because I fear, that, before many years shall pass over our heads, this rejoicing will be turned into repentance and bitter sorrow; it is because I dread that the advantages which peace may bring will be transient and unsubstantial, and be followed, at no very distant period, by the commencement of endless calamity and ruin. I have seen all around me bonfires and illuminations; I have heard the joyous ringing of the bells. But, were they the signs of any real good? the effects of any well-founded national joy? or rather, were they not the lights that were to light up our sepulchre, and the knell which was telling us to our graves? I cannot consent to appear in my wedding-garment, until I know whether the feast to which I am invited, be really a wedding or a funeral. Sir, I speak in perfect plainness and sincerity, from the bottom of my heart, and with the solemnity of a death-bed declaration (a situation much resembling that in which we all stand), when I declare, that my hon. friends, who, in a moment of madness and weakness, have fatally put their hands to this treaty, have signed the death-warrant of their country. They have given it a blow, under which it may languish for a few years, but from which I do not conceive how it is possible for it ever to recover. I feel how very unpleasant it is to deal in predictions, which I who make them most devoutly wish may never prove true. I know also the uncertainty of all human affairs, and am not profane enough to set bounds to the dispensations of Providence; but as far as any hope now appears,—any hope which can be rationally acted upon—such as any man would venture to avow, I can see, though anxiously I look for it, no possible means of escape.—There is but one thing which could enable this country to counterbalance the power of France on the continent; and this is our navy, which depends upon our commerce and navigation, as these do upon our colonial possessions. On the other hand, there is but one thing wanting to them to make their empire universal as well by sea as by land; and that is, that they should have our commerce and navigation, and through that, a mean of re-establishing their marine; this is now given into the hands of France, and the consequence seems to me inevitable.—Only one thing more, Sir, I shall notice, which is drawn from me by what has fallen from the hon. mover or seconder, and is, I believe, also to be found in the address. It is the calling of this an honourable peace. I would suggest to the hon. gentleman, and all who are to talk in future upon the subject, that the less is said of the honour of the thing the better. It is, besides, highly impolitic in the hon. gentleman in another view. They are undertaking more than they are required to do.

Digitized by Google

Much as I think of national honour—esteeming it as I do the very life and soul of the politics of all great countries—I will, for the sake of argument, in the present case, lay it entirely out of the question. I will be content if the hon. gentleman will show me, that this is a safe peace. Give me safety, and I will ask nothing more. If, however, my hon. friends were driven to it by fatal necessity, it must be a sufficient justification. Whether such imperious circumstances existed, we shall hear on the day of discussion. It will certainly be wrong to condemn it prematurely; I shall therefore wait patiently for that discussion, which will clear up the matter to the satisfaction of the House.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, he hoped that his right honourable friend would pardon him, if he expressed an opinion that he had gone into rather more minuteness than the question now before the House called for, even in his view of it. The observations of his right hon. friend were (he would pardon him for saying so) a little premature; that subject was not now before the House; even in his majesty's speech from the throne, there was expressed no other sentiment on the peace, but such as was conveyed by these words: "That his majesty trusts the arrangement "will be found conducive to the substantial interests of this country, and honourable to the British character." In this address there was no reference whatever even to that sentiment so conveyed, from the throne. Indeed, it would be irregular and indecorous to ask of the House an opinion upon a subject not fully before it. His right hon. friend very well knew the preliminaries of peace had been signed on the part of his majesty and the French republic, but the terms were not before the House. His right hon. friend had entered into the subject of the peace, however, and had expressed some lamentation over it. He should not now follow him in answer to what he urged; although he might, in some measure, regularly do so. Nor should he enter into any dispute now upon the general proposition laid down by his right hon. friend; not because he was unprepared, but because another opportunity would offer for that purpose. He should then enter on the discussion with his right hon. friend; but he should do it under a painful feeling; for painful it was to differ in opinion from one who had proved himself to be a virtuous guardian of the constitution, and to whom the country was under deep obligation for many great services, particularly when he warned that country of its danger when its safety was at stake. His right hon. friend had said, that we ought to consider the extension of our commerce as the only counterbalance in our power against the extension of territory of the French republic. He would not now refer to the terms of the peace; but he would aver, that all that we had given up, would have afforded to us no sort of security against the danger which was apprehended by his right hon. friend. He did not agree with his right hon. friend on the subject of the extent of the power of France, and of our mode of balancing that power; for he thought the best counterpoise of this country, against the growing power of France, was in the preservation of our constitution. To our industry and skill, to our frugality and temperance, much was to be also confided;—to the right direction and preservation of what remained of the faculties, abilities, and resources of the country (and happily much indeed remained of such resources), much was to be looked for as a security for us in time of peace, for a continuance of its blessings. It never was in the contemplation of those who had the honour of advising his majesty to sign the preliminaries of the peace, that what they did was the effect of necessity. His right hon. friend had stated, that some unknown necessity might have been the cause—I disclaim that plea (said Mr. Addington)—I will be no party to such a statement. I do not seek my own justification, nor will my colleagues, I am persuaded, seek theirs in any such way—that would be really undervaluing the resources of our country. If instead of acceding to the terms agreed upon, and which are likewise soon to be finally settled, the enemy had made it necessary for us to continue the contest, we should, I am confident, have continued the contest; and I am confident also, that we should have proved to the world that we have still sufficient faculties and resources to maintain the honour and preserve the security of the British empire. I could not forbear saying this; for the purpose, chiefly of disclaiming that species of justification which my right hon. friend supposed to arise out of necessity. I hope my justification, and that of my colleagues, will be found in the actual state of things, in

Digitized by Google

which, I trust, it will appear, we have had a prudent regard to the true interest of our country; and I aver also, that if we had not advised his majesty to conclude these terms we should not only have been wanting to our constituents, but have been guilty of a gross dereliction of our duty to his majesty.

Mr. *Sheridan* said:—I shall certainly vote for the address which has now been moved, because, it was not, as is usual on such occasions an exact echo of the speech from the throne. The speech contains distinctions and characters of the peace, which, if they had been re-echoed in the address, I, for one, could not have supported. The Address as it now stands does not appear liable to any great objection, and I have no wish to disturb the unanimity of our vote. Notwithstanding the unanimity, however, I sincerely believe, that if this were the time for men to deliver their opinions, there never was a period of less real unanimity. The right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt) has spoken of the peace in terms to which I can by no means agree. I differ from him in every expression by which he characterised the peace as glorious and honourable. Still more do I differ from those who contend that it was inexpedient to make peace at all. This, Sir, is a peace which every man ought to be glad of, but no man can be proud of. It is a peace involving a degradation of the national dignity, which no truly English heart can feel with indifference. It was a peace, which the war had a tendency to lead to, as its necessary result. The war was one of the worst wars in which this country was ever engaged: and the peace is, perhaps, as good as any man could make, under the circumstances in which the country was placed.

Earl *Temple*, though not thinking that there was any reason to rejoice at the terms, said, he nevertheless agreed in the general sentiment of the propriety of waiving, for the present, the discussion of the terms of the preliminaries, and of supporting the Address. But in giving his support to the Address, he by no means pledged himself to support the peace, which, considering its terms, he certainly could not approve of.

Mr. *James Martin* concurred in approving the peace; but begged it might be understood, that neither this approbation, nor this vote, was meant to convey an idea, that he did not wish to bring to punishment those who had plunged the country into the war and brought the constitution into danger.

The motion was agreed to *nem. con.*

The King's Answer to the Commons' Address.] To the Address of the Commons, his Majesty returned this Answer:

"Gentlemen, I thank you for this dutiful and loyal address. The sentiments it conveys are fresh and satisfactory proofs of that attachment to my person and government, and of that regard for the honour and interests of this country, by which your conduct has been invariably distinguished."

Copy of the Convention with Russia.] Oct. 30. Lord Hawkesbury presented, by his Majesty's command, the following

TRANSLATION of CONVENTION between his Britannic Majesty and the Emperor of Russia, signed at St. Petersburgh the 5-17 June 1801.

In the Name of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity.---The mutual desire of his majesty the king of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, being not only to come to an understanding between themselves with respect to the differences which have lately interrupted the good understanding and friendly relations which subsisted between the two states; but also to prevent, by frank and precise explanations upon the navigation of their respective subjects, the renewal of similar altercations and troubles which might be the consequence of them; and the common object of the solicitude of their said majesties being to settle, as soon as can be done, an equitable arrangement of those differences, and an invariable determination of their principles upon the rights of neutrality, in their application to their respective monarchies, in order to unite more closely the ties of friendship and good intercourse, of which they acknowledge the utility and the benefits, have named and chosen for their plenipotentiaries; viz. his majesty the king of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Alleyn lord baron Saint Helens, his said majesty's privy counsellor, and his ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to his majesty the emperor of all the Russias; and his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, the sieur Nikita count de Panin, his privy counsellor, minister of state for the department of foreign affairs, present chamberlain, Knight Grand Cross of the Orders of Saint Alexander Newsky, and of Saint Anne of the First Class, of that of Saint Ferdinand, and of Merit, and of the Red Eagle, and of Saint

Digitized by Google

Lazarus; who, after having communicated their respective full powers, and found them in good and due form, have agreed upon the following points and articles:

Art. 1. There shall be hereafter between his Britannic majesty and his Imperial majesty of all the Russias, their subjects, the states and countries under their dominion, good and unalterable friendship and understanding; and all the political, commercial, and other relations of common utility between the respective subjects shall subsist, as formerly, without their being disturbed or troubled in any manner whatever.

Art. 2. His Britannic majesty and the emperor of all the Russias declare, that they will watch over the most rigorous execution of the prohibitions against the trade of contraband of their subjects with the enemies of either of the high contracting parties.

Art. 3. His Britannic majesty and his Imperial majesty of all the Russias having resolved to place, under a sufficient safeguard, the freedom of commerce, and navigation of their subjects, in case one of them shall be at war, whilst the other shall be neuter, have agreed:

1. That the ships of the neutral power may navigate freely to the ports, and upon the coasts of the nations at war.

2. That the effects embarked on board neutral ships shall be free, with the exception of contraband of war, and of enemy's property; and it is agreed not to comprise, in the number of the latter, the merchandize of the produce, growth, or manufacture of the countries at war, which should have been acquired by the subjects of the neutral power, and should be transported for their account, which merchandize cannot be accepted in any case from the freedom granted to the flag of the said power.

3. That in order to avoid all equivocation and misunderstanding of what ought to be considered as contraband of war, his Britannic majesty, and his Imperial majesty of all the Russias declare, conformably to the 11th article of the treaty of commerce concluded tween the two crowns, on the 10-21 February 1797, That they acknowledge as such the following objects only; viz. cannons, mortars, fire arms, pistols, bombs, grenades, balls, bullets, firelocks, flints, matches, gunpowder, saltpetre, sulphur, cuirasses, pikes, swords, sword belts, knapsacks, saddles, and bridles, excepting, however, the quantity of the said articles which may be necessary for the defence of the ship, and of those who compose the crew; and all other articles whatever, not enumerated here, shall not be reputed warlike and naval stores, nor be subject to confiscation, and of course shall pass freely, without being subjected to the smallest difficulty, unless they be considered enemy's property in the sense above specified. It is also agreed that that which is stipulated in the present article shall not be prejudicial to the particular stipulations of one or the other crown with other powers, by which objects of a similar kind should be reserved, prohibited or permitted.

4. That, in order to determine what characterizes a blockaded port, that denomination is given only to a port where there is, by the dispositions of the power which attacks it with ships stationary, or sufficiently near, an evident danger in entering.

5. That the ships of the neutral power shall not be stopped but upon just causes and evident facts: that they be tried without delay; and that the proceeding be always uniform, prompt, and legal.

In order the better to insure the respect due to these stipulations, dictated by the sincere desire of conciliating every interest, and to give a new proof of their uprightness and love of justice, the high contracting parties enter here into the most formal engagement to renew the severest prohibitions to their captains, whether of ships of war, or merchantmen, to take, keep, or conceal, on board their ships, any of the objects which, in the terms of the present convention may be reputed contraband, and respectively to take care of the execution of the orders which they shall have published in their admiralties, and wherever it shall be necessary.

Art. 4. The two high contracting parties, wishing also to prevent all subject of dissension in future, by limiting the right of search of merchant ships going under convoy to those cases only in which the belligerent power might experience a real prejudice by the abuse of the neutral flag, have agreed,

1. That the right of searching merchant ships belonging to the subjects of one of the contracting parties, and navigating under convey of a ship of war of the said power, shall only be exercised by ships of war of the belligerent party, and shall never extend to letters of marque, privateers, or other vessels, which do not belong to the royal or imperial fleets of their majesties, but which their subjects shall have fitted out for war.

2. That the proprietors of all merchant ships belonging to the subjects of one of the contracting sovereigns, which shall be destined to sail under convoy of a ship of war, shall be required, before they receive their sailing orders, to produce to the commander of the convoy their passports and certificates, or sea letters, in the form annexed to the present treaty.

3. That when such ship of war, having under convoy merchant ships, shall be met with by a ship or ships of war, of the other contracting party, who shall then be in a state of war, in order to avoid all disorder, they shall keep out of cannon shot, unless the state of the sea, or the place of meeting, render a nearer approach necessary; and the commander of the ship of the belligerent power

Digitized by Google

shall send a boat on board the convoy, where they shall proceed reciprocally to the verification of the papers and certificates that are to prove on one part, that the ship of war is authorized to take under its escort such or such merchant ships of its nation, laden with such a cargo, and for such a port; on the other part, that the ship of war of the belligerent party belongs to the royal or imperial fleet of their majesties.

4. This verification made, there shall be no pretence for any search, if the papers are found in form, and if there exists no good motive for suspicion. In the contrary case, the commander of the neutral ship of war (being duly required thereto by the commander of the ship or ships of war of the belligerent power) is to bring to, and detain his convoy during the time necessary for the search of the ships which compose it, and he shall have the faculty of naming and delegating one or more officers to assist at the search of the said ships, which shall be done in his presence on board each merchant ship, conjointly with one or more officers appointed by the commander of the ship of the belligerent party.

5. If it happens that the commander of the ship or ships of the power at war, having examined the papers found on board, and having interrogated the master and crew of the ship, shall see just and sufficient reason to detain the merchant ship, in order to proceed to an ulterior search, he shall notify such intention to the commander of the convoy, who shall have the power to order an officer to remain on board the ship thus detained, and to assist at the examination of the cause of her detention. The merchant ships shall be carried immediately to the nearest and most convenient port belonging to the belligerent power, and the ulterior search shall be carried on with all possible diligence.

Art. 5. It is in like manner agreed, that if any merchant ship, thus convoyed, should be detained without just and sufficient cause, the commander of the ship or ships of war of the belligerent power shall not only be bound to make to the owners of the ship and of the cargo a full and perfect compensation for all the losses, expenses, damages, and costs, occasioned by such a detention, but shall moreover undergo an ulterior punishment for every act of violence or other fault which he may have committed, according as the nature of the case may require. On the other hand, the convoying ship shall not be permitted, under any pretext whatsoever, to resist by force the detention of the merchant ship or ships of war of the belligerent power; an obligation to which the commander of a ship of war with convoy is not bound to observe towards letters of marque and privateers.

Art. 6. The high contracting parties shall give precise and efficacious orders, that the judgments upon prizes made at sea shall be conformable with the rules of the most exact justice and equity; that they shall be given by judges above suspicion, and who shall not be interested in the affair in question. The government of the respective states shall take care that the said decisions shall be speedily and duly executed, according to the forms prescribed, and, in case of an unfounded detention, or other contravention to the regulations stipulated by the present article, the owners of such ship and cargo shall be allowed damages proportioned to the loss occasioned thereby. The rules to observe for these damages, and for the case of unfounded detention, as also the principles to follow for the purpose of accelerating the process shall be the matter of additional articles, which the contracting parties agree to settle between them, and which shall have the same force and validity as if they were inserted in the present act. For this effect, their Britannic and Imperial majesties mutually engage to put their hand to the salutary work which may serve for the completion of these stipulations, and to communicate to each other without delay, the views which may be suggested to them by their equal solicitude to prevent the least grounds for dispute in future.

Art. 7. To obviate all the inconveniences which may arise from the bad faith of those who avail themselves of the flag of a nation without belonging to it, it is agreed to establish, for an invariable rule, that any vessel whatever, in order to be considered as the property of the country the flag of which it carries, must have on board the captain of the ship, and one half of the crew, of the people of that country, and the papers and passports in due and perfect form; but every vessel which shall not observe this rule, and which shall infringe the ordinances published on that head, shall lose all rights to the protection of the contracting powers.

Art. 8. The principles and measures adopted by the present act shall be alike applicable to all the maritime wars in which one of the two powers may be engaged, whilst the other remains neutral. These stipulations shall in consequence be regarded as permanent, and shall serve for a constant rule to the contracting powers in matters of commerce and navigation.

Art. 9. His majesty the king of Denmark and his majesty the king of Sweden, shall be immediately invited by his Imperial majesty, in the name of the two contracting parties, to accede to the present convention, and at the same time to renew and confirm their respective treaties of commerce with his Britannic majesty; and his said majesty engages, by acts which shall have established that agreement, to render and restore to each of these powers all the prizes that have been taken from them, as well as the territories and countries under their dominion, which have been conquered by the arms of his Britannic majesty since the rupture, in the state in

Digitized by Google

which those possessions were found at the period at which the troops of his Britannic majesty entered them. The orders of his said majesty, for the restitution of those prizes and conquests, shall be immediately expedited after the exchange of the ratifications of the acts by which Sweden and Denmark shall accede to the present treaty.

Art. 10. The present convention shall be ratified by the two contracting parties, and the ratifications exchanged at St. Petersburgh in the space of two months at farthest, from the day of the signature.

In faith of which the respective plenipotentiaries have caused to be made two copies thereof, perfectly similar, signed with their hands; and have caused the seal of their arms to be affixed thereto.—Done at Saint Petersburgh, the 5-17 June 1801.

(L. S.) St. Helens.
(L. S.) N. C. de Panin.

Formula of the Passports and Sea Letters which are to be delivered in the respective admiralties of the states of the Two High Contracting Parties, to the ships and vessels which shall sail from them, conformable to Article 4, of the present treaty.

Be it known, that we have given leave and permission to N——, of the city or place of N——, master and conductor of the ship N——, belonging to N——, of the port of N——, of N—— tons or thereabouts, now lying in the port or harbour of N——, to sail from thence to N——, laden with N——, on account of N——, after the said ship shall have been visited before its departure, in the usual manner by the officers appointed for that purpose; and the said N——, or such other as shall be vested with powers to replace him, shall be obliged to produce in every port or harbour which he shall enter with the said vessel, to the officers of the place, the present license, and to carry the flag of N—— during his voyage.—In faith of which, &c.

Translation of First Separate Article of the Convention between his Majesty and the Emperor of Russia.

The pure and magnanimous intentions of his majesty the emperor of all the Russias having already induced him to restore the vessels and goods of British subjects, which had been sequestered in Russia, his said majesty confirms that disposition in its whole extent; and his Britannic majesty engages himself also to give immediate orders for taking off all sequestration laid upon the Russian, Danish, and Swedish properties, detained in English ports; and to prove still more his sincere desire to terminate amicably the differences which have arisen between Great Britain and the northern courts, and in order that no new incident may throw obstacles in the way of this salutary work, his Britannic majesty binds himself to give orders to the commanders of his forces by land and sea, that the armistice, now subsisting with the courts of Denmark and Sweden, shall be prolonged for a term of three months, from the date of this day; and his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, guided by the same motives, undertakes, in the name of his allies, to have this armistice maintained during the said term.

This separate article shall have the same force and validity, as if it were inserted word for word in the treaty signed this day; and the ratifications thereof shall be exchanged at the same time.

In faith of which, the respective plenipotentiaries have caused to be made two copies thereof, perfectly similar, signed with their hands; and have caused the seal of their arms to be affixed thereto.—Done at Saint Petersburgh, the 5-17 June 1801.

(L. S.) St. Helens.
(L. S.) N. C. de Panin.

Translation of Second Separate Article of the Convention between his Majesty and the Emperor of Russia.

The differences and misunderstandings which subsisted between his majesty the king of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, being thus terminated, and the precautions taken by the present convention not giving further room to fear that they can in future disturb the harmony and good understanding which the two high contracting parties have at heart to consolidate, their said majesties confirm anew, by the present convention, the treaty of commerce of the 10-21 February 1797, of which all the stipulations are here cited, to be maintained in their whole extent. This separate article shall have the same force and validity as if it were inserted word for word in the treaty signed this day; and the ratifications thereof shall be exchanged at the same time.

In faith of which the respective plenipotentiaries have caused to be made two copies thereof, perfectly similar, signed with their hands; and have caused the seal of their arms to be affixed thereto.—Done at Saint Petersburgh, the 5-17 June 1801.

(L. S.) St. Helen's.
(L. S.) N. C. de Panin.

Translation of the Declaration of the Minister Plenipotentiary of the Emperor of Russia.

Although the magnanimous intention of his imperial majesty of all the Russias to do full and entire justice to those British subjects who have suffered losses during the troubles which have disturbed the good intelligence between his empire and Great Britain, is already proved by facts, his imperial majesty, consulting solely his good faith, has more

Digitized by Google

over authorized the undersigned plenipotentiary to declare, as he does declare, by these presents:

"That all the ships, the merchandize, and the property of British subjects, which had been sequestrated during the last reign in Russia, shall not only be faithfully restored to the said British subjects, or to their agents, but also that for the effects which may have been alienated in such a manner as to render it impossible for them to be restored in kind, a suitable equivalent shall be granted to the proprietors, which equivalent shall be hereafter determined according to the rules of equity."

In faith of which we, plenipotentiary of his Imperial majesty of all the Russias, have signed the present declaration; and have caused the seal of our arms to be affixed thereto.—Done at Saint Petersburgh, the 5-17th June 1801.

(L. S.) N. C. DE PANIN.

Copy of the Preliminary Articles of Peace with France.] Lord Hawkesbury also presented the following

COPY OF PRELIMINARY ARTICLES OF PEACE between HIS MAJESTY and the FRENCH REPUBLIC; signed at London the 1st of October 1801.

His majesty the king of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the first consul of the French republic, in the name of the French people, being animated with an equal desire of putting an end to the calamities of a destructive war, and of re-establishing union and good understanding between the two countries, have named for this purpose; namely, his Britannic majesty, the right honourable Robert Banks Jenkinson, commonly called lord Hawkesbury, one of his Britannic majesty's most honourable privy council, and his principal secretary of state for foreign affairs; and the first consul of the French republic, in the name of the French people, citizen Lewis William Otto, commissary for the exchange of French prisoners in England; who, after having duly communicated to each other their full powers, in good form, have agreed on the following preliminary articles:

Art. 1. As soon as the preliminaries shall be signed and ratified, sincere friendship shall be re-established between his Britannic majesty and the French republic, by sea and by land, in all parts of the world; and in order that all hostilities may cease immediately between the two powers, and between them and their allies respectively, the necessary instructions shall be sent, with the utmost dispatch, to the commanders of the sea and land forces of the respective states; and each of the contracting parties engages to grant passports, and every facility requisite to accelerate the arrival and ensure the execution of these orders. It is farther agreed, that all conquests which may have been made by either of the contracting parties from the other, or from their respective allies, subsequently to the ratification of the present preliminaries, shall be considered as of no effect, and shall be faithfully comprehended in the restitutions to be made after the ratification of the definitive treaty.

Art. 2. His Britannic majesty shall restore to the French republic and her allies; namely, to his Catholic majesty, and to the Batavian republic, all the possessions and colonies occupied or conquered by the English forces in the course of the present war, with the exception of the island of Trinidad, and the Dutch possessions in the island of Ceylon; of which island and possessions his Britannic majesty reserves to himself the full and entire sovereignty.

Art. 3. The port of the Cape of Good Hope shall be open to the commerce and navigation of the two contracting parties, who shall enjoy therein the same advantages.

Art. 4. The island of Malta, with its dependencies, shall be evacuated by the troops of his Britannic majesty, and restored to the order of St. John of Jerusalem. For the purpose of rendering this island completely independent of either of the two contracting parties, it shall be placed under the guarantee and protection of a third power, to be agreed upon in the definitive treaty.

Art. 5. Egypt shall be restored to the Sublime Porte, whose territories and possessions shall be preserved entire, such as they existed previously to the present war.

Art. 6. The territories and possessions of her most faithful majesty shall likewise be preserved entire.

Art. 7. The French forces shall evacuate the kingdom of Naples and the Roman territory. The English forces shall in like manner evacuate Porto Ferrajo; and, generally, all the ports and islands which they may occupy in the Mediterranean or in the Adriatic.

Art. 8. The republic of the Seven Islands shall be acknowledged by the French republic.

Art. 9. The evacuations, cessions, and restitutions, stipulated for by the present preliminary articles, shall take place in Europe within one month; in the continent and seas of America and of Africa, within three months; and in the continent and seas of Asia, within six months after the ratification of the definitive treaty.

Art. 10. The prisoners made respectively shall, immediately after the exchange of the ratifications of the definitive treaty, all be restored, and without ransom, on paying reciprocally the debts which they may have individually contracted. Discussions having arisen respecting the payment for the maintenance of prisoners of war, the contracting powers reserve this question to be settled by the definitive treaty, according to the law of

Digitized by Google

nations, and in conformity to established usage.

Art. 11. In order to prevent all causes of complaint and dispute which may arise on account of prizes which may be made at sea after the signature of the preliminary articles, it is reciprocally agreed that the vessels and effects which may be taken in the British channel and in the North seas, after the space of twelve days, to be computed from the exchange of the ratifications of the present preliminary articles, shall be restored on each side; that the term shall be one month, from the British channel and the North seas, as far as the Canary islands inclusively, whether in the Ocean or in the Mediterranean; two months, from the said Canary islands as far as the equator; and lastly, five months in all other parts of the world, without any exception, or any more particular description of time or place.

Art. 12. All sequestrations imposed by either of the parties on the funded property, revenues, or debts, of any description, belonging to either of the contracting powers, or to their subjects, or citizens, shall be taken off immediately after the signature of the definitive treaty. The decision of all claims brought forward by individuals of the one country against individuals of the other, for private rights, debts, property, or effects whatsoever, which, according to received usages and the law of nations, ought to revive at the period of peace, shall be heard and decided before the competent tribunals; and in all cases, prompt and ample justice shall be administered in the countries where the claims are made. It is agreed, moreover, that this article, immediately after the ratification of the definitive treaty, shall apply to the allies of the contracting parties, and to the individuals of the respective nations, upon the condition of a just reciprocity.

Art. 13. With respect to the fisheries on the coasts of the island of Newfoundland, and of the islands adjacent, and in the gulph of Saint Lawrence, the two parties have agreed to restore them to the same footing on which they were before the present war; reserving to themselves the power of making in the definitive treaty, such arrangements as shall appear just and reciprocally useful, in order to place the fishing of the two nations on the most proper footing for the maintenance of peace.

Art. 14. In all the cases of restitution agreed upon by the present treaty, the fortifications shall be delivered up in the state in which they may be at the time of the signature of the present treaty; and all the works which shall have been constructed since the occupation shall remain untouched.

It is farther agreed, that in all the cases of cession stipulated in the present treaty, there shall be allowed to the inhabitants, of whatever condition or nation they may be, a term of three years, to be computed from the notification of the definitive treaty of peace, for the purpose of disposing of their properties acquired and possessed either before or during the present war; in the which term of three years they may have the free exercise of their religion, and enjoyment of their property.

The same privilege shall be granted in the countries restored, to all those who shall have made therein any establishments whatsoever, during the time when those countries were in the possession of Great Britain.

With respect to the other inhabitants of the countries restored, or ceded, it is agreed, that none of them shall be prosecuted, disturbed, or molested, in their persons or properties, under any pretext, on account of their conduct or political opinions, or of their attachment to either of the two powers, nor on any other account except that of debts contracted to individuals, or on account of acts posterior to the definitive treaty.

Art. 15. The present preliminary articles shall be ratified, and the ratifications exchanged in London, in the space of fifteen days, for all delay; and immediately after their ratification, plenipotentiaries shall be named, on each side, who shall repair to Amiens for the purpose of concluding a definitive treaty of peace, in concert with the allies of the contracting parties.

In witness whereof, we, the undersigned plenipotentiaries of his Britannic majesty, and of the first consul of the French republic, by virtue of our respective full powers, have signed the present preliminary articles, and have caused our seals to be put thereto.—Done at London the 1st day of October, 1801, the ninth Vendemiaire, year ten of the French republic.

(L. S.) HAWKESBURY. (L. S.) OTTO.

Vote of Thanks to Sir James Saumarez, &c. &c.] Oct. 30. The following Resolutions were moved, in the Lords, by earl St. Vincent, supported by lord Nelson, and agreed to *nem. diss.* 1. "That the Thanks of this House be given to rear admiral sir James Saumarez, baronet, knight of the most honourable order of the Bath, for his alacrity and zeal in pursuing, and his able and gallant conduct in the successful attack on the combined squadron of the enemy, in the Straits of Gibraltar, on the 12th and 13th days of July last, by the squadron under his orders. 2. That the thanks of this House be given to the captains and officers of the squadron under the orders of the said rear admiral, for their gallant conduct on that occasion; and that the rear admiral be desired to signify the same to them. 3. That this House doth highly approve of, and acknowledge, the services of the

Digitized by Google

seamen and marines on board the ships under the orders of the said rear-admiral in the late successful attack on the combined squadron of the enemy; and that the captains of the several ships be desired to signify the same to their respective crews, and to thank them for their gallant behaviour."

The same Resolutions were also moved in the Commons, by the chancellor of the exchequer, and agreed to *nem. con.*

Debate in the Commons on the Preliminaries of Peace with France.] Nov. 3. The order of the day being read, the House proceeded to take into consideration the Preliminary Articles of Peace between his Majesty and the French Republic, signed at London the 1st of October 1801. And the said Preliminary Articles being read,

Sir *Edmund Hartopp* rose to move an Address of Thanks to his Majesty for his gracious communication relative to the signature of the Preliminaries of peace with the French republic; and he was emboldened to hope for the unanimous concurrence of the House, from the universal applause with which the peace had been received throughout the kingdom. For his own part, he could not help contemplating the event with exultation, as having put an end to one of the most arduous wars that this country had ever been engaged in. The zeal and unanimity with which the contest (purely defensive on our part) had been commenced and pursued, were, he thought, beyond all example; and when the numerous difficulties which ministers had to encounter were taken into consideration, their conduct entitled them to the approbation of the country. It was their arduous task to protect the state from the destructive machinations of hideous Jacobinism; the doctrines of whose disciples went to the entire subversion of our constitution, our government, and our laws, while they aided the inordinate ambition of the enemy to extend their power to every quarter of the globe. To guard against these fearful consequences, was the duty of ministers; and in the attainment of this great object, it was indispensably necessary to have recourse to continental alliances. The first impression made upon the principal powers of Europe, was nearly the same as that upon which Great Britain had acted. With them, therefore, we entered into concert, in defence of the common cause; and had the same zeal and perseverance distinguished their conduct as had characterised that of the British sovereign, no disappointment of views would, in all human probability have taken place. The revolutionary principles which had been so industriously propagated in this country, had threatened the existence of our happy constitution. By the laudable exertions, however, of his majesty's ministers, those dangers had been averted; Jacobinism itself had been laid prostrate in the dust: and this country, in common with the rest of Europe, was henceforward to enjoy the blessings of peace. We had happily preserved our constitution, in church and in state; we had extended our dominion in every quarter: and our extended territories in the East and West Indies had derived a security which left no ground of alarm for the permanency of the manifold advantages which they would produce. The islands of Ceylon and Trinidad, in point of locality and commercial benefit, would prove of incalculable advantage to this country. The moderation and sound policy, which, on the part of his majesty's ministers, had distinguished the late negotiation, effectually rescued their conduct from the imputation of rapacity or injustice, while the territory that we had acquired by the event was calculated to produce lasting benefit. The defection of our continental allies had left us as much unconnected with the continent as we were before the war; while the enemy had extended their territory and revenue so far as to render any further prosecution of the contest not only inexpedient, but hopeless. Under these circumstances, Austria was naturally induced to enter into a treaty with France, and thus ceased, of course, the war upon the continent. Deserted now by that ally, upon whose exertions we had placed the greatest reliance, there remained no hope of compelling the enemy to retire within the ancient limits of their territory. Measures of peace on our part, were then wisely resorted to; and the temper and moderation which distinguished the whole of the negotiation, were deserving of the utmost praise. By this generous conduct we held out to Europe an illustrious example of honour and of good faith, which would not fail to prove highly beneficial to our interests and our reputation. Upon these grounds he gave the measure of peace his cordial support, and should conclude with moving the following Address:

Digitized by Google

"Most Gracious Sovereign; We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in parliament assembled, beg leave to return your Majesty our most humble thanks for having been graciously pleased to lay before us a copy of the preliminaries of peace, which have been ratified by your Majesty and the French republic. We assure your Majesty, that having taken them into our most serious consideration, we reflect, with heartfelt gratitude, on the fresh proof which has been afforded, on this occasion, of your Majesty's paternal care for the welfare and happiness of your people; and contemplate with great satisfaction the prospect of a definitive treaty of peace, founded on conditions, which, whilst they manifest your Majesty's wisdom, moderation, and good faith, will, we trust, be productive of consequences highly advantageous to the substantial interests of the British empire."

Mr. *Lee* (member for Dungarvon) seconded the motion. His business, in the first place, should be to consider what were the objects of the war now so happily terminated, and whether any of those objects had been obtained by the peace. If the war had been undertaken with a view to reduce France to foreign subjection, to restore royalty to that country, or to force a government upon the people, it should have received his decided opposition. He had ever considered that it was a war of aggression on the part of France, and of self-preservation on that of this country. To show that this was the case it was necessary to advert to a declaration of the French government, in February 1792, that a treaty hostile to France had been entered into by certain continental powers, to which England had been invited to become a party, but refused to accede to it. Had England consented to enter into that confederacy, the war would have been altogether unjustifiable on her part; but this, it was well known, was not the case. When, in the same year, the king of France declared his acceptance of the new constitution, the same was announced by him to the several monarchs of Europe, and the answer of his Britannic majesty proved his determination not to interfere with the internal concerns of France. But what was the conduct of France at this time towards Great Britain? It was at that very period that her numerous emissaries appeared in England and Ireland. He wished to bury in oblivion the consideration of the melancholy consequences that resulted from their designs on the sister country but these circumstances were too recent and too dreadful to be hastily forgotten. The addresses from some of the British societies and manufacturing towns to the government of France breathed an obvious spirit of revolution and were cordially received by the enemy. In so doing, did not France interfere with our internal government? Had we been disposed to have entered into the war at that time, sufficient grounds had been afforded; and our forbearance bespoke the reluctance with which the intention was entertained. When, at length, by the aggression of France, we were forced to become parties in the war, we found Austria and Prussia united against France, upon principles evidently opposite to those upon which we had entered; for their objects were certainly hostile to the existing order of things in that country, while ours was purely that of self-preservation. Notwithstanding these circumstances, it became our interest to avail ourselves of their support. Before the invasion of Holland took place, the only principle of Great Britain was that of self-preservation; but, after that event, we had to prevent the aggrandizement of France, and to protect our ally. It happened, unfortunately that notwithstanding the effectual assistance which was afforded that country; although the enemy were completely driven back to their own frontiers, the emissaries of Jacobinism were eminently successful; and the people, instead of uniting in support of their own independence, bound themselves in strict alliance with France. Thus did the machinations of the Jacobinical factions procure that which the force of arms could not effect. —Our next great object was, the destruction of the enemy's commerce, as a means of bringing them to reasonable terms. For this purpose we directed our attention to the Western world. An able general, sir Charles Grey, directed our troops; and the naval department of the expedition was under the orders of that brave and skilful admiral lord St. Vincent. The enemy's colonies in that quarter were, by the prompt exertions of these distinguished officers, speedily reduced; and the fruits of their successes contributed greatly to the subsequent prosperity of our naval arms. After this

Digitized by Google

event, our next object was, to render the war, as much as possible, of a naval description; and never, surely, had the exertions of this or any other country proved so glorious. During the American war, a northern confederacy existed similar to that with which we had lately to contend. We then wished to check the refractory spirit of those powers; but the circumstances of the moment did not permit us to make the attempt. What we had not then the power to effect, we have since accomplished. The ministry of that day were of opinion, that it was inexpedient and hazardous to make the attempt, and therefore the question in dispute remained undecided. At length, however, the so-much-wished-for decision has taken place; and the claims which we have substantiated are of such a nature, that they can be abandoned only with the naval superiority of the country. The unexampled success of our naval exertions had so increased our commercial advantages as to enable us to pay the most heavy taxes, and to support throughout, the glory of the British character. We had acted on such principles as had laid the foundation of a maritime code more advantageous than any that had ever before existed, while we had extended our territories in every quarter. From the time that we lost America, we had turned our attention to the East Indies. In the late war, although aggrandizement formed originally no object of it, yet such a principle became necessary, from the progress which the enemy had made in the extension of their territory. The king of Mysore, instigated by France, had become formidable to us, and his proceedings were such that we had found ourselves under the necessity of adopting measures effectually to check his career. This was the only Indian power which was in alliance with France; and the success of our exertions has deprived her of it. We either possess or control the whole of the Mysorean territory; and while we had obtained this great addition to our territory, we had tranquillized and rendered friendly the native princes of that quarter of the world. While we thus extended our dominions on the continent of India, we had rendered them still more secure by the acquisition of the island of Ceylon, the best of all the Dutch colonies. In the West Indies we had also received a material acquisition in the possession of Trinidad. Being contiguous to North and South America, it opened a mart for our manufactures, that must prove eminently beneficial to us. This acquisition was important also, from the consideration of France having added the whole of St. Domingo to her territories in the West Indies, against which, he doubted not, the island of Trinidad would prove a sufficient balance. In the progress of the war, we had amply shown, that our principle was not aggrandizement, but security. Finding, however, that France was making extensive acquisitions, it became necessary for us to keep pace with her. If France had acquired an extent of seacoast in Flanders, England had obtained a far greater extent of additional coast in Asia, highly advantageous in a commercial as well as territorial point of view. In the progress of the war, notwithstanding our successes, every opportunity had been embraced to effect the return of peace. In the first instance, we offered to restore the whole of our conquests in favour of the interests of our allies; but this proposal was rejected. In the negotiation at Lisle, we had also agreed to a retrocession of nearly an equal extent, it being then the determination of ministers to retain only the island of Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope. He was at a loss, therefore, to conceive how those gentlemen who at that time approved of the terms proposed by lord Malmesbury, could, with any degree of consistency, dissent from the preliminary conditions now before the House. The noble lord (Grenville), who signed all the papers of instruction in the case of the treaty of Lisle, he anticipated, from some particular circumstances, would oppose the present treaty; and if so, his lordship would find himself called upon to say how he could agree to the terms proposed at Lisle, and disapprove of those now under the consideration of parliament. A right hon. gentleman (Mr. Windham), he understood, also meant to dissent from the present treaty; but, upon what grounds, it was extremely difficult to conjecture; he too, having been a member of the cabinet during the negotiations at Lisle. As he was bound by his oath to support the interests of his country, he could not have approved of the terms offered at Lisle without being convinced that they were beneficial to the state; and if they were, he could not consistently dissent from the present treaty, which included the possessions of the valuable islands of Ceylon and Trinidad. If he dis-

Digitized by Google

approved of the terms in the former case; he was convinced he would have thrown up his situation rather than continue in office, when measures contrary to his sense and judgment were adopted; for, on a recent occasion (the Catholic question), he had acted precisely in that manner; and he was ready to give the right hon. gentleman every credit for the purity of his intentions and the rectitude of his conduct. The probability, therefore, was, that he did not disapprove of the terms proposed at Lisle; and if so, it remained for him to reconcile his conduct on that occasion with his opposition to the present measure.—With respect to the other articles of the treaty, they were nearly the same as those of the negotiations at Lisle. It might, perhaps, be asked, whether we had obtained any of the objects of the war? His answer would be, that we undoubtedly had. We had preserved our constitution, and had laid the foundation of an increase of commercial prosperity to the country. In the prosecution of the war, it necessarily became a struggle of conquest; but the use we had made of our acquisitions was the best proof of the moderation and justice of our intentions. The only objection which certain gentlemen could form to the terms of the treaty was, that we consented to neutralise instead of retaining the Cape of Good Hope. But was this an object which should have induced ministers to continue the war for another campaign? and so, he would ask, what that consequence was likely to prove? was there any probability of a protraction of the war enabling us to obtain better terms? If, with the assistance of the principal powers of the continent, we were unable to drive the enemy within their ancient limits, how could we do so when we stood unassisted and alone? But, it might be asked, where was the security for the continuance of the peace? His answer should be, that it was equally the interest of France and of this country to preserve a system of pacification. Both had gained by the war, and their several objects being attained, neither could have any reason to renew the contest. Another argument might be advanced with respect to the stability of the existing government of France; but whether the present order of things continued, or the colossal power of the republic tumbled to pieces, in either case it could properly be no concern of ours; we had no right to interfere in the internal concerns of that or any other foreign country. The present government of France was more powerful than that of any of the Bourbons; and if the people were satisfied, it was not our business to endeavour to make them otherwise, by telling them that they were ruled by a military government. Whether we formed treaties with the Buonapartés, or with the Bourbons, was of very little consequence to us; and as to the fidelity of treaties, he considered it as a mere chimera, as it only had influence as long as the contracting parties considered it to be beneficial to their interests. This was the undisguised language of a former emperor of Morocco, who said that he broke treaties the moment it was his interest so to do. Other monarchs, the emperor added, endeavoured to throw the blame on each other; but he took all the credit of the transaction to himself. The spirit of the former part of this declaration, he was persuaded, actuated almost every modern court; and hence any argument of the description alluded to would weigh but little in his estimation. The war was commenced, on our part, for the preservation of our constitution; the object had been answered, and peace was therefore advisable. The constitution of England was purchased with the blood and treasure of our ancestors. It had been handed down to us as a sacred charge, and it was our duty to preserve it inviolate for our posterity. Mr. Lee next adverted to the national debt. At the close of the American war, it was 237,000,000*l.*, and at present it amounted to between four and five hundred millions; but at the former period, we had no means of paying off the debt. From the sinking fund the country had derived manifest advantages. By means of this fund, the gradual payment of the national debt was provided for. If the peace continued seventy-three years, the whole of the debt would be cleared off. On the whole, he considered the present peace as the best that could possibly have been obtained under all the circumstances of the case.

Lord *Leveson Gower* could not agree, that any gentleman who was friendly to the terms offered at Lisle, was necessarily bound to give his approbation to the present preliminaries. At the time lord Malmesbury went to Lisle, the situation of this country was very different from what it was at the present moment. A short time before that negotiation com-

Digitized by Google

menced the Bank had stopped payment, and commercial credit had received a most violent shock, a spirit of dangerous insubordination existed in our fleet, and the funds had fallen so low as almost to give birth to despair of the future resources of the country. In Ireland, symptoms of violent disaffection had been displayed, and communications were held with the enemy for the purpose of overthrowing the government. The navy of the enemy was then nearly equal to our own; in the North sea, we were inferior in point of numbers; and in the Mediterranean, not a British frigate was to be seen. But how changed was the present aspect of affairs! Credit and commerce had risen to the utmost pitch of splendour. Ireland was for ever secured to us by the act of Union. Our fleet was in a state of the most excellent discipline, and the spirit of our sailors was elated by the remembrance of the brilliant victories in which they had shared. Such was our state now, contrasted with what it was at the time when lord Malmesbury had negotiated at Lisle. Gentlemen seemed to forget that the cessions now made were infinitely greater than those proposed in that negotiation. We were, in addition to the possessions then proposed to be ceded, now to give up Minorca, Surinam, Porto Ferrajo, and Malta. And what had we obtained in recompence for such liberality of restitution? By the terms proposed at Lisle, the integrity of Portugal was expressly stipulated for, on the footing it stood previous to the war; whereas, we now pretended to guarantee this integrity after Portugal had purchased her own peace by humiliation and sacrifices. The terms of the preliminaries were, he confessed, far below his expectations, yet he was not disposed to give a vote against the peace. Peace was an object for which he was heartily joyful, and he was not now prepared peremptorily to assert that it could have been obtained on better terms. Tha peace, such as it was, had excited universal joy throughout the country, and having himself witnessed this joy, he could not consent to vote against it, though he had thought it his duty to throw out these observations.

Lord *Hawkesbury* rose and said:—I rise, Sir, at this early hour of the debate, in consequence of the observations which have fallen from my noble friend, and in order to explain, I trust, to the satisfaction of the House, the motives which induced his majesty's ministers to enter into a negotiation with the French republic, and to conclude the preliminaries of the treaty submitted this night to its consideration. The very reasons urged by my noble friend against the nature and terms of the treaty, tend, in my opinion, most directly and strongly to evince their propriety, and their claim to the approbation of the country. He has compared the project as proposed by lord Grenville at Lisle with the articles of the present adjustment—a mode of proceeding unwarranted by the fair consideration of both in their various relations; and he has assimilated things between which no comparison can exist. I state in positive terms, that they cannot be compared; for no man will venture to deny that lord Grenville would have been glad to have taken less from the government of France than he demanded at that period of negotiation. After nine years effusion of blood —after contracting an increase of debt to the amount of nearly 200 millions—after the indefatigable and uninterrupted exertions of the country—but, at the same time, after a series of the most splendid achievements and unexampled successes, there is not a man in the kingdom who must not admit that peace was a most desirable attainment, was the object of his sincerest wishes and most ardent desires. But, notwithstanding the hope and zeal with which all must have looked and laboured for the restoration of tranquillity, I solemnly disclaim the plea which has been set up by some persons—the plea of over-ruling necessity. I am sure, that such a cause for the conclusion of the preliminary treaty will not be traced to any thing like satisfactory grounds. I am desirous that his majesty's ministers should, in the adoption of that measure, be tried by those reasons in which the war originated, by which it was carried on, and which were found to exist when the contest ceased.

In saying thus much, I am, Sir, aware that the peace, however eligible, however adequate to the relative state of this country and of France, however it can be justified upon the principles of sound policy, is not free of all evil, of all chance, of all risk or danger. But let me ask, what event has taken place in the recollection of all who hear me, or what event may yet take place, in accounting for which it has been or will be possible to remove every objection? I do not at-

Digitized by Google

tempt to pledge myself for the security which the peace will give to this country, or to be responsible for the stability of the treaty; but, under all the circumstances in which we were situated, I maintain that it is honourable and advantageous; and the question now for the decision of the House is, Whether his majesty's ministers have been to blame or not? In the consideration of this question, gentlemen will not, I am persuaded, lose sight of the relative state of the two countries, nor hesitate to examine whether better terms could have been obtained. Some persons object to the peace, because they contend that the end of the contest is not gained. They argue, that the war was undertaken with the view of destroying republicanism, and stopping the progress of the revolution. I maintain, on the contrary, that the destruction of republicanism was not its object; and that no interference in the internal concerns of France was intended. Such statements I absolutely disclaim; and declare, on the contrary, that the country was forced into the war by the conduct of France. It was she who interfered in the affairs of other nations; who took part and direction in the internal regulations of all countries; who, both openly and by her agents and intrigues, propagated disaffection, sedition, anarchy, and revolt. The revolution was a torrent so dreadful and violent in its origin and progress, that no man, or set of men, could entertain a hope of checking its impetuosity; but if we had opposed it, even in its fatal and almost irresistible course with some success; if we had rendered it less dangerous in its effects than it would otherwise have been; if we had, at least changed its direction, and made it flow in a channel less dangerous to the general happiness and interests of the world, I trust, that some acknowledgment is due to the wisdom, vigilance, and perseverance of government, as well as to the spirit and exertions of the country. It is, indeed, impossible to look at the present state of France without being convinced that we have at least effected this important change; a change which is manifest to the most superficial observer, in the manners, the opinions, the habits of the people of France. Let those who pretend to doubt the justice of this observation, look to the state of France as it was in 1793, and as it is in 1801. Let them compare the striking alteration which has taken place in the manners, opinions, and habits to which I have alluded, and then give me a candid answer. If after this comparison—if after all that has been done, I am called upon to deliver my opinion with respect to the moral evils of peace, I must say I feel, under all the circumstances of the present moment, that they are certainly less than on any former occasion. With regard to the continuance of hostilities, there are two considerations by which we are to be regulated; the first is, whether we possessed the power of forming another coalition against France; and the second, if we continued the war, what harm could France do to us, and what harm could we do to France? The first coalition had failed; the second had equally failed; and had we any satisfactory grounds to make us hazard another experiment of the same nature? What was the probability of forming a new coalition in the least degree likely to be of service to the powers of the continent, or to this country in particular? It was altogether impossible to find in Europe the elements of such a combination of force directed to the attainment of one grand end. Were they to be found in Germany? Were they to be found in Prussia? Were they to be found in Russia? I ask, then, what was the prospect of success that could be derived from a third confederacy against France? And if, therefore, it be evident that no coalition could be formed, I ask what object could we possibly have under that point of view, in the further prosecution of hostilities? Where was it possible for us, with our immense superiority by sea, to affect France by striking a fatal blow? The fact was, that neither power could affect the other.

These remarks, Sir, I have made with a view of showing the inefficacy of any new coalition against the French republic, as well as the inefficacy of the continuance of the war between her and this country. In discussing the preliminary articles of peace, there are three considerations which press strongly upon my mind; I mean the time, the tone, and the terms of the treaty. And first, with respect to the time at which the treaty was signed. It was concluded under a just impression of your success; it was concluded at a moment when your triumphs were complete. Such a time was worthy of the country to accelerate the important work of pacification. Would

Digitized by Google

it have been prudent to have pushed matters to an extreme point? In the hour of victory it became the spirit and magnanimity of the government and the people, to listen to the voice of peace; and if the terms appeared advantageous, I have fair grounds to presume that a more glorious opportunity could not present itself. In speaking of the tone in which the peace has been concluded, it is sufficient for me to observe, that it is marked with a tone of dignity and independence; that the honour of the nation has been preserved; and that every idea of humiliation has been resisted with success, both with respect to ourselves and our allies. When I come to an examination of the terms of the treaty, I must disclaim the support, and condemn the opinions, of those who have been accustomed to undervalue the resources of this country, and to extol those of the enemy. The circumstances under which we were, as opposed to the enemy, have been essentially different, and it is in that difference that the best reasons for concluding a peace will be found. But first, Sir, it may not be improper to call the attention of gentlemen to our conduct towards our allies; and particularly to the strict maintenance of that good faith for which we have been so eminently distinguished. The first power which I have occasion to mention is the Ottoman Porte, whose territories and dominions are to be restored and maintained in their integrity, as they were before the war. An instance of our generosity, as well as of our good faith, must not however be passed over; I allude to the release which we gave to those powers connected with us, from express and positive stipulations, when they were exposed by the necessity of the moment to danger from continuing faithful to their engagements. To Portugal every protection has been given, consistent with our strength and her interests; and in the case of Naples we displayed a magnanimity which we might have been justified in omitting. Naples was called upon by France to exclude our shipping from her ports; but she went further, and joined in an alliance which would have warranted on our part a declaration of war; yet, with sufficient grounds to justify to Europe and to our own conscience such a measure, what was our conduct upon that occasion? We interfered in her favour, and obtained the restoration of her territories, and the re-establishment of her independence. In the case of Portugal, our conduct had not been less exemplary. To the Ottoman Porte we were under peculiar obligations; and of all our allies she remained faithful to us to the last. To her we evinced proofs of the most inviolable attachment; for we obtained for her, without sacrifice, not only the restitution of all her dominions and territories in their integrity, but we also obtained the renunciation of France to acquisitions which threatened not only her independence, but her existence. France had ceded Venice to Austria; Austria had, in return, ceded the Ex-Venitian islands to France. These islands, which, from their situation, might have been productive of the most serious danger to the Ottoman Porte, have been abandoned by the French Republic, and their independence recognised. Thus, Sir, we have obtained by the treaty all that could be obtained for our allies, and not only preserved our good faith inviolate, but manifested our generosity where it could not be expected. There are, indeed, two other powers which it may be proper to notice; the Stadtholder and the king of Sardinia. It is obvious that we were not bound by any obligation of strict faith towards them; yet, every thing which this country could do for them has been performed. An arrangement with respect to the former had, at our instance, been carried on at Berlin, but that arrangement had, from various causes, been withdrawn. In favour of Sardinia we had also interfered, although she had given up the coalition, and entered into an offensive alliance with France.

Having noticed the manner in which we have uniformly displayed our good faith, I now come to the question of acquisition, as it should be fairly taken with respect to the power and resources of a country. And here let me observe, that the spirit of acquisition may be strained beyond its proper limits. It is not of this country alone that I am speaking; for the principle will, if properly scrutinized, apply with equal force to France. I contend, that an increase of power does not take place in proportion to the increase of acquisitions. That this doctrine applies no less to France than to this country, is justified by the opinion of men well qualified to form an estimate of the strength and resources of nations; and we accordingly find it supported by Dumourier and Carnot. I think it unnecessary to enter

Digitized by Google

into any detailed reasoning to show, that the principle applying to the continent, is equally true with respect to the acquisition of colonial power. In looking to the state of our settlements in the West Indies, I do not see any cession made by us which can be the subject of regret; nor is there in the East Indies any position given to France which ought to be viewed with jealousy. The possessions in which she is to be reinstated in that quarter, are not calculated for the purposes of aggression; and if she were formidable in the force and extent of her naval resources and power, the island of Mauritius would, under every consideration, afford a more dangerous point of attack against our empire in the East. But it is maintained, that we give up by the treaty another possession of Great importance to our foreign concerns, and to our commercial prosperity. I allude to the island of Minorca, which I do not consider as an acquisition. Let us, in order to form a clear judgment, reflect upon our conduct with respect to that island in former wars; and I believe I shall not incur the charge of presumption in delivering this opinion. We have always acquired that island whenever we pleased, and we have always lost it at the conclusion of peace. By relinquishing it then, after the war, we avoid the expense of preserving it in peace; and if the situation be advantageous to us in war, we can always make ourselves masters of it. Of Malta I speak with less confidence, which, from its situation, and its almost impregnable state, is certainly of considerable political importance in the Mediterranean; but, giving up this point as far as it relates to political weight and influence, I must observe, that Malta is no source of trade and opulence; and that if it be considered as connected with the prosperity of the Levant trade, its importance in that respect will be greatly diminished. The Levant trade may, like many other topics of commercial speculation, be highly valued; but it is, as far as it relates to this country, next to nothing. Gentlemen will give me credit for this statement, when they hear that the whole of the British manufactures exported to the Levant during the war, does not exceed 112,000*l.*, and that this is to be taken out of the aggregate exports of twenty-four millions. The trade of Great Britain is nothing, when compared with that of the other countries to the Levant. It is chiefly supplied by the south of Europe; and it must remain with the southern countries, from the nature of its articles, and the facility of communication and intercourse. With respect to the north of Europe, it has certainly been principally in the possession of the Dutch, yet the Dutch have had no settlement in the Mediterranean. Why, then, it may be asked, did the Dutch succeed in cultivating this particular branch of trade? I answer, because their policy was much wiser than ours; because we prevented ships with forged bills of health from entering our ports, and made all vessels coming from the Mediterranean perform quarantine; because we equally prohibited the landing both of sound and bad goods. The Dutch, on the contrary, gave them an airing within their ports, separated the good from the bad merchandise, and allowed the immediate importation of the former. Thus they occupied almost the whole of the Northern trade to the Levant; and this was so strongly felt by us, that, about two years ago, it was judged expedient to repeal these laws, in order to encourage a system of trade which the Dutch converted to their own profit, although they possessed no port in the Levant.

After considering what has been given up by the treaty, it remains for me to say a few words on those possessions which we are to retain; and in what I have to offer on the subject of Ceylon and Trinidad, I hope I shall not be thought to over-rate these two islands, when I call them the two great naval stations of the parts of the world to which they belong. Ceylon, in every point of view, cannot be too highly appreciated. It contains ports so capacious and secure, that the whole of the navy and commerce of Great Britain might ride with ease and safety in them. It is also in its native productions of immense value, and holds out a position to which our Indian army might retire if necessary, and defy the attempts of the united force of the world. Thus the very object, which above all others we should from our duty and interests prefer, we have gained by this treaty. Trinidad is also a naval station of very considerable importance, affording not only a secure retreat for our navy, but so very productive and healthy as to induce us to select and appropriate it to ourselves, in preference to every other possession in that quarter. Thus, Sir, considering the results of the war; considering all our

Digitized by Google

old possessions, with our acquired territory, I say, if the term glory is not to be taken into the account by some gentlemen, that we have at least made an honourable peace. I say, if it is not in all respects as advantageous as you could wish, it cannot be denied that it is honourable. Let it be compared with the treaties of Ryswick, of Utrecht, of Aix-la-Chapelle, of Paris, and of Versailles; and let it be remembered that the relative state of this country with that of the contracting parties, both at those periods and at present should be fairly canvassed. By two of these peaces the country gained nothing. I need scarcely mention those of Ryswick and Aix-la-Chapelle. By that of Versailles we lost very considerably; for we were deprived of our American colonies and some valuable possessions. It was only by the peace of Utrecht in 1713, and that of Paris in 1763, that we gained any thing. Yet if we compare the treaty of Utrecht with the present treaty, the latter will be found by no means inferior, either in point of advantage, or in the promise of stability. The severity of the conditions rendered the former the source of bitterness, and the cause of subsequent contention. France had been every where defeated, and found no consolation in continental victories, while in the present war she has triumphed over all the great powers of the continent. She makes the present treaty after a series of unexampled successes; and though some persons may not pronounce it as glorious as that of 1713, or as surprising as that of 1763, yet, taken together in all its objects and effects, it may be justly considered as advantageous to Great Britain as either of them. It may be argued, that we obtained Minorca and Gibraltar by the peace of Utrecht; yet, whatever reliance may be placed on these advantages, I believe neither of them can be deemed superior to the possessions of Ceylon and Trinidad. By the treaty of Paris, France gave up Canada, and Florida was ceded by Spain; yet, with all that extent of territory, I am strongly inclined to think that they were not real acquisitions.

I now ask fairly, whether the peace given by government to the country, compared with every former peace, is not as honourable to the character of the country, and as advantageous as circumstances could allow? With respect to the negotiation at Lisle, I am at a loss to conceive the consistency of persons who could sign the one and not sign the other. The question for our consideration is not a peace in which the powers of the continent take a leading part, but a separate and naval peace between Great Britain and France. I will not, however, assimilate the two procedings, for it would be comparing a first project with an ultimate peace. In the project we only required Ceylon, Trinidad, and the Cape; but the noble lord says, we have since obtained several important possessions. I grant we have, but we have been deprived of others, among which we have to reckon the island of St. Domingo, where we had some of the most valuable points and strongest holds. The only power we then stipulated for was Portugal, yet nothing was attempted at that time, compared to what has been effected now. There is no comparison whatever, between the two periods, and the outlines and substance of the negotiations. In discussing the terms of this peace, I am aware that the great power of France ought to be considered in a general scale, which will make them appear less advantageous; and there is no man who regrets the circumstance more than myself. Yet the increase of that power is, perhaps, not altogether so vast as it may appear at first sight, if we take it in proportion to the increase of the other principal powers of the continent. Austria, Russia, and Prussia, have had a very considerable addition by the division of Poland; and the first power in particular, has augmented in a superior degree, both her extent of territory, and her population, by the annexation of Venice to her dominions. In appreciating the power of France, we must consider the diminution sustained by her commerce, the ruin of her manufactures, and an incalculable loss of wealth, while, if we consider the real increase of the substantial power of Great Britain, it will be found in proportion to the continental increase of France.

Under this impression, allow me, Sir, for a moment to consider the possessions of Great Britain as they were previous to the war; and first, in taking an estimate of the exports of British manufactures to our old West India islands, for the three last years of peace, I find them amount to 2,185,000*l.* while they are not less during the three last years of war than 3,561,000*l.* Our imports from the same quarter were, during the same periods, 3,877,000*l.* in peace, and 5,101,000*l.* in time of war. I

Digitized by Google

also find, by referring to the proper documents, that our exports to the East Indies were, during the three last years of peace, 3,183,000*l.* and during the last three years of war 5,617,000*l.* The amount of our exports to the United States of America is still more surprising, making, in the same periods of peace, 3,694,000*l.* and, in the same periods of war, no less than, 6,232,000*l.* With respect to the continent of Europe, the total of our exports was, in the first instance, 1,530,000*l.*, and in the latter, 2,545,000*l.* From these statements, it appears, that the commerce of this country, as applied to our old possessions, has been nearly doubled in some instances, and has had in all an augmentation of one third. I beg, Sir, to press this the more, as it is necessary to consider the increase of our trade, with the decrease of that of France. In calculating the power of both countries, as it should possess weight in the general scale, it is but fair to enter into a comparison of their respective navies; and here the best mode that presents itself is to take them as they stood at the commencement and the end of the war; on the 1st of Feb. 1793, and on the 1st of Oct. 1801. On the 1st of Feb. 1793, the British navy consisted of 135 sail of the line, and 133 frigates; and on the first of Oct. 1801, it comprised 202 sail of the line, and 277 frigates. The navy of France was, at the commencement of the war, composed of 80 sail of the line and 66 frigates, and at the conclusion it consisted of 39 sail of the line, and 35 frigates. It has indeed been said, that France will give her whole attention to recruit her navy. She will no doubt exert herself to accomplish an object so desirable; but, whatever her efforts may be, there are two points in the arduous task which are well entitled to our consideration. The first is, the number of years she must be employed in building ships to make her naval establishment equal even to what it was; and the second, the number of ships necessary to be built in order to enable her to enter into a competion with this country. All who examine this subject thoroughly, will have no objection to give to France a great many years, and afterwards to take the chance of a war with her. We shall not be employed in building of ships, but in making of seamen. It is with the increase of our commerce, that our navy will always increase. France will, no doubt, make great exertions for the purpose; but whether a contest take place or not, in the course of eight or ten years, I am confident that we shall be enabled to renew it with more advantage than we began it in the late war. One of the reasons which induces me to entertain this opinion, arises from a conviction that the country will possess all its ardour and spirit, a lively recollection of all its brilliant exploits, and a just confidence in the extent of its resources and finance. I have one question to put to every man who hears me, and that is, Whether peace could be concluded upon safer and more honourable terms? We accepted the situation which we have the honour of filling, when the country was involved in war with almost every power of Europe. We had to contend with France, Spain, Russia, and the rest of the Northern powers. The convention concluded with them will, I trust, be considered as a fair acknowledgment of our maritime rights; and with that acknowledgment it is ardently to be hoped that the restoration of peace and harmony will take place. Since that event, a peace with France has been effected. I do not wish to say that it has been brought about by any extraordinary means; but I can say with confidence for my colleagues and myself, that nothing has been left undone on our part in exertion, in perseverance, and in moderation, to give to the country that blessing of which it was so much in want, and for which it is so eminently indebted to its own admirable spirit and patriotism, and to the zeal and gallantry of its soldiers and sailors. We have been engaged in a most tremendous contest; but we have come out of it with honour and advantage. The situation of Europe and that of Great Britain, may still appear critical; yet I hope, that in a sound system of policy, consisting of a mixture of firmness and moderation, will be always found a counterpoise to every danger, and a remedy for every evil.

Mr. *Thomas Grenville* said, that those who opposed the peace had been represented as frantic people, who contended that the restoration of the French monarchy should have been the *sine quâ non*. This charge, however, could not apply to him, as he had never entertained such an idea. As to the right of interference in the affairs of France, we had surely a right to interfere for the purpose of preventing that enormous aggrandizement, which was big with danger to ourselves. This

Digitized by Google

had ever been considered, by our wisest statesmen, as an object of the first importance to this country. Whenever a peace had been concluded between two contending parties, it followed, of course, that one party had the superiority over the other, which it was fair and proper to exert for the purpose of ensuring advantageous terms, such terms, at least, as should place the country which accepted them in a state of security. And he hoped that the spirit of the English would ever lead them to resist, with energy and decision, terms fraught with dishonour, and big with humiliation. But, while he disclaimed the wild notions which had been falsely imputed to him, he hoped he should never be found among those faithless watchmen of the state, who sought to lull the people into a false security, but should ever endeavour to rouze them to a sense of existing danger. He felt it his duty to oppose the peace; and would contend, that both in the present treaty, and in the convention with the northern powers, ministers had assumed a humble tone, which would lead to consequences dangerous to the existence of the country. The gentlemen who had that night supported the peace, had dissembled the real object of the war. He had ever considered it to be a war for indemnity and security. The enemy had threatened the existence of our liberties and our constitution. To preserve them; to prevent the diffusion of principles subversive of civil society; to obtain indemnity for the expences which we had been compelled to incur, and security for the future, was the avowed object of the war. Ministers seemed to have forgotten our victories, and to have lost sight of our conquests. To have been victorious, and yet to have treated as a vanquished nation, was a galling reflexion to a British mind. The noble lord had begun by stating, that the present period was very different from that at which the former negotiation took place; that we had originally opposed the principles of France, but latterly we had opposed her power. Now, in his opinion, both led to the same end; for if the power of France threatened the existence of this country, it was as much our duty to oppose that power, as it was to oppose her principles, when exerted for the same purpose.—Mr. Grenville then entered into a comparison of the terms of the present treaty, with the terms offered to us at Lisle; and showed that the latter were far preferable to the former. It had been said, that it was such a peace as every man was glad of, but no man was proud of. But he hoped that this was an epigrammatic expression, and not a true picture. For if Englishmen could rejoice at a bad peace, at a peace of which they could not be proud, the national character was totally lost. Though the supporters of the peace had prudently forborne to insist on its glory, they still persevered in representing it as honourable. But in what light was it honourable? The noble lord had truly contended, that time and circumstances were necessary considerations in the conclusion of a treaty; but he was at a loss to perceive the wisdom of that policy, which would reject better terms in a moment of dismay, and accede to worse in the hour of victory and confidence. There might be a show of magnanimity in such conduct, but was it wise, was it politic, was it compatible with the real interests of the country? Ministers have assumed great credit to themselves for their conduct towards our allies. What has been done for them? Turkey was the only power which could be truly said to be in alliance with us. It was said that the integrity of the Sublime Porte had been secured. But is that her opinion? Does she feel secure? A week after this stipulation for her security, Turkey preferred the guarantee of her enemy to that of her ally, and chose to negotiate for herself. As we had compelled the French to evacuate Egypt, both the security of Turkey and our own, required that we should have retained in our possession some strong fortress, garrisoned by British troops. Without this precaution, what was there to prevent the French from returning to Egypt? At the very moment when we magnanimously stipulated for the evacuation of that country, there was not a French soldier in it, who was not a prisoner to our gallant, persevering, and victorious army. As to the integrity of Naples, that was as insecure as Turkey; for, though the French troops had evacuated a part of the Neapolitan territory, what was to prevent them from returning? especially, as they retained possession of the Cisalpine republic. Such is the situation, such the security, such the integrity of Naples! In casting our eyes over the map of Europe, we look in vain for the kingdom of Sardinia. The territories of his Sardinian majesty live only in our memory. In the Mediterra-

Digitized by Google

nean, he had only the little island of Sardinia left, for the security of which, he was solely indebted to the protection of our fleet; a protection which he would lose the moment the definitive treaty should be signed. The next of our allies, the integrity of whose dominions exhibits an illustrious proof of our magnanimity, is Portugal. He adverted to the treaty of Badajos, and to the cession of a portion of the Portugueze territory in the Brazils; and he asked, whether it was to be understood, that our treaty with France sanctioned that cession? Portugal, like Naples, had been secured by us, in the integrity of her possessions; and our magnanimity on this occasion had been loudly vaunted by the noble lord, because those two powers had formed separate treaties with the enemy. But, were not those treaties the effect of compulsion on the one hand, and the result of conquest on the other? Should we have been justified in declaring war against Portugal and Naples for yielding, against their will, to dire necessity? If no blame, then, attached to Portugal, if she ought really to be considered as our ally, as no human being could suspect her of possessing the ability to resist her enemy, there could not be the smallest reason for any diminution of our attachment to her. How have we provided for her security? France, as far as any treaty can bind her, has concluded a treaty with Portugal;—but on what terms? She has taken from her Olivenza and the adjoining territory, which Spain had long coveted; and for which nothing more was requisite than to express a wish, in order to obtain it from France. France, at the same time, took for herself a portion of the Brazils, which gave her the command of the river Amazon, and the whole of the adjacent coast. Mr. Grenville quoted M. de la Condamine, in order to show the advantage which France would derive from the possession of this tract of country, in addition to what she already enjoyed in the proximity of Dutch Guiana. Is this the mode of guaranteeing the possessions, of securing the integrity of a faithful ally? If integrity and dismemberment be synonymous terms, then, indeed, the assertion may be true.—In allusion to the term honourable, which the noble lord has absurdly applied to the peace, every man must feel, that no peace was safe that was not honourable, and that no peace was honourable which was not safe; but, unfortunately, this peace was neither safe nor honourable; nor could any peace be honourable, which gave us territories that did not belong to the power by whom they were given. The conduct of our government in the negotiation at Lisle was very different; they did what was wise and proper to attain peace; they selected certain points of importance, which it was necessary, for the preservation of that honour, to insist upon. He was surprised to hear certain expressions which had fallen from the noble lord, relative to the acquisitions we had made by the present peace, which he contrasted with lord Malmesbury's projet, the wisdom of which he extolled. We should have been fully justified in the retention of Ceylon, the Cape, and Cochin, for the more effectual defence of our Eastern empire. When we looked at the cessions which we have made, we should find the conquests we had retained comparatively trifling. He was not at all satisfied with the situation in which the Cape was left by the treaty. We had ceded a port which might become a great annoyance to our trade. The Cape furnished a military station, of vast importance in the event of a sudden war, not preceded by a proclamation. The marquis Cornwallis, on his return from India, had strongly pressed the necessity of retaining Cochin, and the Cape; or if only one of them could be retained, the Cape in preference to Cochin. Though Ceylon was an important settlement, Cochin, on the western side of the Peninsula, was one of the strongest military frontiers in India. In the event a war, a fleet might sail from the Cape and arrive at Cochin, before any person in India could know of its arrival, and before any person in England could be apprized of its sailing. He might possibly be told, that our merchantmen were advised to avoid the Cape; that the importance of that settlement was not so great as was represented; and that our ships might touch at the Brazils. The settlement which the French had acquired in the Brazils, would, in that case, give additional importance to France. The Cape and Cochin were insisted on by lord Malmesbury, at Lisle, as points from which we would not accede; and these were now given up, from that want of vigour, spirit, and prudence, which marked our negotiations. An attempt had been made to represent the Levant trade as unimportant to this country; but our manufacturers would tell a far different tale.

Digitized by Google

Was it true, that Malta was unimportant? that fortress which had sustained a blockade of nearly two years. It could not be seriously contended. To rescue Malta and Egypt from France, is deemed an object of primary importance; but when it is considered expedient to give them up, their importance suddenly vanishes, and they become trivial and insignificant. No part of the treaty of peace, nor any thing connected with it, excited so much astonishment in his mind, as our treatment of the house of Orange, except the defence of that treatment. Britain was bound by a solemn treaty with that house. He understood some private arrangement was making, between France and Prussia, relative to that subject; but the prince of Orange was not to be thrown as an outcast on the world, by those for whom he had sacrificed his all. Where would have been the difficulty in introducing an article in the preliminary treaty, similar to one which was prepared at the negotiation at Lisle, which stipulated for the restoration of the whole property of the house of Orange, or the full value of it in money. There could be no objection to this; but we wanted the spirit, the vigour, or courage, to support an ally, who had been so unfortunate as to be an enemy to France! —Though he did not think the peace of 1783 was either glorious or honourable, yet he would recommend gentlemen to read the preliminaries to that treaty, and compare them with the present. Let the cessions made then be compared with the cessions made now; and, though be thought the former a peace which presented nothing but defeat and humiliation, yet the latter would be found infinitely worse in itself, and more dangerous in its consequences. The present peace was not honourable, in respect of our allies; nor was it necessary to be made. The chancellor of the Exchequer had indignantly disclaimed the plea of necessity. Although a difference of opinion existed, as to the terms of the peace, no one would contend that we were reduced to the necessity of making a peace, dishonourable to our allies, or unsafe to ourselves. He contrasted the terms of the peace of Utrecht, and that of 1763, with those of the present; showed the vast increase of power which France had acquired now, and the consequent increase of danger to ourselves. Could any man view the present power of France, and consequently our present danger, without shuddering? In the event of a war, notwithstanding our stipulations, all the ports and fortresses in the Mediterranean would be seized by France, and shut against us. She would monopolize its commerce in time of peace, its power in time of war. If we acted upon such a principle of negotiation, or rather of sacrifice, and suffered the definitive treaty to be completed, would it not place us in a state of war with France in twelve months? Could a peace be good, if its duration were so short? It would reduce us to the necessity of dismantling our navy, and of disbanding our army and our volunteers. It had deprived us of all the military points and stations; and, notwithstanding all our exertions of economy, what would be our state, if France, in the course of twelve months, should take us unprepared, and direct her whole power against us? Did they not believe, that such a war must shake our country to the very centre? Feeling, as he did, that the peace was neither honourable to our allies, nor safe to ourselves, he should give his decided negative to the motion.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that upon a subject of such importance, he could not reconcile it to his feelings to give a silent vote. He would therefore shortly state his reasons for concuring in the motion. The first question that presented itself for the consideration of the House was, whether, taking every circumstance into consideration, it would have been consistent with sound policy for England to have continued the war? He considered the war to have been entered into, on the part of Great Britain, purely for the purpose of defence, and though, in all respects, it had not answered to our wishes, yet Great Britain had the honour of having acted, throughout the whole of this eventful contest, in the most disinterested manner: she had not only poured forth her blood and treasure in defence of her own independence, but had offered to Europe the means of preservation. From causes which it was unnecessary to state, the confederacy of powers upon the continent was dissolved, and therefore it became necessary for Great Britian, either to carry on the war alone against France, or to make peace with that state, if it could be done upon terms consistent with our safety and independence. In deciding upon the question of the safety of this country by the peace, it would be vain to deny that France had attained a degree of power, which could not but create uneasi-

Digitized by Google

ness in the mind of every thinking man. It was absurd to contend that Great Britian with a navy all-powerful as it was, could affect France upon the continent, unless assisted by a confederacy of continental states; we were therefore under the necessity, as he had before stated, of continuing the contest, without the hope of making any serious impression upon France, or of concluding a peace upon fair and equitable terms. His lordship then entered into an examination of the preliminaries, which, he contended, were as favourable as we could look for in the present state of Europe; and that by them Great Britain had not only maintained her own security, but had, with that generosity and good faith which always marked her conduct, stipulated for the integrity of her allies.

Earl *Temple* could not help disapproving of the concessions which ministers had made, as dangerous to the safety, and degrading to the honour of England; no security having been retained to counterbalance the immense territorial acquisitions of France. He apprehended much from the exultation with which the tidings of peace seemed to have been received by the disaffected: their hopes appeared to revive; and a party of degenerate Englishmen, he saw with regret, was to be found, mean enough to drag the coach of general Lauriston, the bearer of these tidings, through the streets of London, with cries of "Long live Buonaparté." It was an afflicting prospect, and augured ill to the country; but it was in some degree encouraged by the conduct of ministers; for he understood it to be a fact, that citizen Lauriston was accompanied from France by a person who had been twice sent out of this country under the Alien act; that on his arrival at Dover, this person being recognized by the proper officer in that port, he refused him permission to land; but citizen Lauriston threatening if he did not he would return to Paris with the preliminaries, the officer, afraid of taking the responsibility upon himself, suffered him to land and proceed to London, and he was actually in the coach with Lauriston, when he was dragged through the streets. He was informed that ministers had not the spirit to take notice of the exceptionable person alluded to—an unhappy omen of what this country had to expect from an intimate connexion with France, particularly under such ministers. He opposed them from no factious motive: he thought them undeserving the confidence of the country, and the preliminaries on the table convinced him they were. He was aware that he should not be seconded in his objections to the terms of the proposed peace, by those who were in the habit of opposing the conduct of administration; but he did not wish for their support. He who should declare his pleasure at the peace, "because it was glorious to the enemy," was not the connexion he would court; it was a sentiment which could not dignify the patriot or the Englishman—he should shrink from it with abhorrence; the man who employed it should be carefully avoided, and his principles guarded against. The peace which was supported upon such motives, must be hollow and suspicious.

Mr. *Banks* considered the question to be, whether the present treaty was better for the country, than a prolongation of the war? The terms, perhaps, might be considered, by moderate men, as good as could, under all the circumstances, be fairly expected. He would accept the hope which was held out to the nation. France had subdued all the alliances made against her on the continent, and we could have no farther expectations from a confederacy. We could no longer expect any coalition which could materially preserve us from the continental powers. He could not conceive how those who disapproved of the terms proposed in the treaty at Lisle could condemn the present. He could now entertain no hopes of any thing which could proceed from internal commotions in France. It must not be forgotten, that our situation was so much worse since the year 1797, as we had since sustained all the hardships and expense of a state of warfare; we stood now in need of peace and tranquillity. If we proceeded in the war, we should make France realize the character given it, of a military nation. Suppose, for a moment, that we could obtain better terms; that we might, for instance, retain the Cape of Good Hope, and some of our other conquests, were these objects of sufficient magnitude to induce us to continue the war even for one month? He, for one, relied not on the terms of any treaty, but on the vigour and determination of the country to sustain itself in every situation. He was anxious for peace to be made in the spirit of peace; and wished the House seriously to consider, that suspicion on

Digitized by Google

the one side could not fail of engendering distrust on the other.

Mr. *Pitt* rose. He said, that upon a subject in itself of such importance, and one upon which it was unfortunately his lot to differ from some with whom it had been his happiness to have been connected by the strictest ties of friendship, for the greater part of his life, he was anxious to deliver his sentiments, before the attention of the House, and his own powers, should be exhausted by fatigue. In considering the question, whether these terms should be accepted or rejected, there was one proposition which he might lay down, with, he believed, but little danger of contradiction, and that was, that for some time past, all rational, all thinking men, had concurred in an opinion, that whatever their wishes might have been, whatever hopes might at different periods of the war have been entertained, yet, that after the events which had taken place on the continent of Europe, the question of peace or war between Great Britain and France, became a question of terms only. In laying down this proposition, he desired not to have it admitted in words, and rejected in substance. After the conclusion of the peace between France and the great continental powers, after the dissolution of the confederacy of the states of Europe—a confederacy which he had supported to the utmost of his power, and with respect to which he still retained the same sentiments;—after the dissolution, however, of that confederacy, it became merely a question of the terms to be obtained for ourselves, and for those allies who still remained faithful to us and to their own interests. In saying this, he was aware that he differed from many, of whose judgments he had the highest opinion, and whom he both loved and honoured; but it was the firm conviction of his mind, and it was his duty both to the House and the public, fully and candidly to state his sentiments upon the subject. When he said, that the question of peace or war between this country and France was a question of terms only, he wished to be understood as being more anxious about the general complexion of peace, as affecting the character of this country for good faith, honour, and generosity, than he was about any particular acquisition that might be made, or any specific object that might be attained.

In considering the terms that ought to be accepted, it would be necessary to inquire, in the first instance, what would be the expense of continuing the contest, what were the difficulties with which it would be attended, and what hopes could be entertained of its ultimate success? It was undoubtedly the duty of every government, in negotiating a treaty of peace, to obtain the best possible terms; but it was sometimes difficult to know how far particular points might be pressed without running the risk of breaking off the negotiation. For his own part, he had no hesitation to declare, that he would rather close with an enemy upon terms short even of the fair pretensions of the country, provided they were not inconsistent with honour and security, than continue the contest for any particular possession. He knew that when he had the honour of a seat in his majesty's councils, if it had come to a question of terms, and the pacific dispositions of the enemy corresponded with ours, he, for one, should have acted upon that principle; and knowing that to be his own feeling upon the subject, he should neither act with fairness nor candour if he did not apply it to another administration. He did not pretend to state to the House, that this peace fully answered all his wishes; but the government had undoubtedly endeavoured to obtain the best terms they could for the country; and he was ready to contend, that the difference between the terms we had obtained and those of retaining all which we had given up, would not have justified ministers in protracting the war. He was anxious upon this subject to speak plainly, because it was one on which he ought to have no reserve, either with the House or with the country. What the terms were to which this country ought to look in the present state of Europe, had been, in his opinion, most accurately and most ably described by his noble friend. The principle upon which administration acted, and in which he perfectly concurred with them, was, that in selecting those acquisitions which we wished to retain, it was our interest not to aim so much at keeping possession of any fresh conquest which we did not materially want, as to endeavour to retain those acquisitions which, from their situation, or from other causes, were the best calculated for confirming and securing our ancient territories. The object which must naturally first present itself to every minister, must be to give additional vigour to our maritime strength, and se-

Digitized by Google

curity to our colonial possessions. It was to them we were indebted for the unparalleled exertions which we have been enabled to make in the course of this long and eventful contest; it was by them that we were enabled, in the wreck of Europe, not only to effect our own security, but to hold out to our allies the means of safety, if they had been but true to themselves.

In thus considering the subject, it was necessary to look to the leading quarters of the world in which we were to seek for this security. It was evident that our acquisitions were all in the Mediterranean, in the East and in the West Indies. Those who thought that this country ought to retain all its acquisitions, would of course consider any cession made by us as incompatible either with our safety or with our honour. But those who did not go that length, would agree with him in thinking, that when we were to give back a part, and retain a part of our conquests, it was our duty to consider, which of them were the best calculated to promote the two great leading objects to which he had before alluded; and if it should appear, upon examining the present treaty of peace, that in two out of the three quarters which he had mentioned, viz. in the East and in the West Indies, we had retained such possessions, as were the best calculated to effect the security of our ancient possessions, we had, every circumstance considered, done as much as could be expected. Without undervaluing our conquests in the Mediterranean, and the gallant achievements by which they had been effected, especially the capture of Malta (and certainly no man was less inclined to undervalue them than he was), yet it must be admitted by every man acquainted with the real interests of this country, that compared with the East and West Indies, the Mediterranean is but a secondary consideration: indeed this was a proposition so obvious, that it was unnecessary for him to enter into any arguments upon the subject.

Of the importance of the Levant trade, much had formerly been said: volumes had been written upon it, and even nations had gone to war to obtain it. The value of that trade, even in the periods, to which he had alluded, had been much exaggerated; but even supposing those statements to have been correct, they applied to times when the other great branches of our trade, to which we owed our present greatness and our naval superiority, did not exist—he alluded to the great increase of our manufactures—to our great internal trade—to our commerce with Ireland, with the United states of America, with the East and the West Indies: it was these which formed the sinews of our strength, and compared with which the Levant trade was trifling. In another point of view, he admitted that possessions in the Mediterranean were of importance to enable us to co-operate with any continental power or powers, with whom we might happen to be in alliance. He agreed with his noble friend (lord Castlereagh), that when there was not a powerful confederacy on the continent in our favour, this country, with all its naval superiority, could not make any very serious efforts on the continent; yet, in case of such a confederacy, much undoubtedly would be done by the co-operation of the British navy in the Mediterranean. But at the present moment, and situated as Europe at present is, we ought not, upon any one principle of wisdom or policy, to prefer acquisitions in the Mediterranean, to the attainment of the means of giving additional security to our possessions in the East and West Indies. It was upon this principle that he heartily approved of the choice which ministers had made, in preferring our security in the West Indies to any acquisitions that we might have made in the Mediterranean; because he considered it as a rule of prudence, which ought never to be deviated from, not unnecessarily to mortify the feelings or pride of an enemy—[Hear, hear! from the other side]—Gentlemen, from their manner, seemed to think that he had not always adhered to that maxim: he would not interrupt his argument by entering into a personal defence of himself; but, whenever gentlemen were inclined to discuss that point, he was perfectly ready to meet them, giving them the full benefit of any expressions that he had ever used. Supposing the events of the war to be equally balanced, and in negotiating for one of two possessions, both of equal value, but that our possessing one of them would hurt the feelings or mortify the pride of the enemy more than the other, he should think that a justifiable reason for selecting the other; he did not say this from any affectation of sentiment, or peculiar tenderness towards the enemy, but because

Digitized by Google

an enemy would not give up such a possession without obtaining from us more than an equivalent. Upon this principle, he hoped the House would concur with him in thinking, that we ought not to insist upon retaining the island of Malta. If our object had been to retain any possession which had formerly belonged to the enemy, and which we had captured from them, with the view of adding to the security of our old dominions, then Malta did not come under the description, because it was not an ancient possession of the enemy, but had been acquired by him unjustly from a third power. It therefore appeared to him more consistent with wisdom and sound policy, rather to put Malta under the protection of a third power, capable of protecting it, than, by retaining it ourselves, to mortify the pride and attract the jealousy of the enemy.

The other possession which we had acquired, and upon the propriety of retaining which, much had been said, was Minorca. With respect to this island, he perfectly concurred in the opinion of his noble friend (lord Hawkesbury), that it would always belong to the power who possessed the greatest maritime strength; the experience of the four last wars proved the justice of this observation; for Minorca had regularly shifted hands according to the preponderance of maritime strength in the Mediterranean. In time of peace, Minorca was a possession of no great importance or utility; in time of war, it could be of no use whatever, unless we possessed a maritime superiority; and if we did possess that superiority, experience had shown that it would probably fall into our hands. Upon these grounds, he, for one, would not have advised much to be given in another quarter for the purpose of enabling us to retain the island of Minorca, doubting, as he did, whether in time of peace it was worth the expense of a garrison. He thought, therefore, that we were justified in looking to the East and West Indies for the possessions which it was our interest to retain; but he could not help expressing his regret, that circumstances were such as to prevent us from retaining a place so important in many points of view, as the island of Malta; he lamented also, that it was not possible for us to have made a more definitive arrangement respecting its future fate; but unless we had been prepared to say that we would retain it ourselves, he did not know any better plan that could be adopted, than to make it independent both of England and France.

In turning his attention to the East Indies, he certainly saw cause for regret, because the opinion he had been taught to entertain of the value of the Cape of Good Hope was much lighter than that expressed by his noble friend. He knew there were great authorities against him; but, on the other hand, from what he had heard from marquis Cornwallis, and from a right hon. friend of his, who had long presided over the affairs of India (Mr. Dundas), he was induced to think the Cape of Good Hope a more important place than it had been represented on this occasion. But thinking thus highly as he did of the Cape, he considered it as far inferior indeed to Ceylon, which he looked upon to be, of all the places upon the face of the globe, the one which would add most to the security of our East-Indian possessions, and as placing our dominions in that quarter in a greater degree of safety than they had been in from the first hour that we set our foot on the continent of India. An hon. friend of his, had lamented that we had not stipulated for the retention of Cochin, and stated, that in the former negotiations lord Malmesbury had been instructed to insist upon its remaining in our possession. How far lord Malmesbury was instructed to insist upon, or recede from, certain points contained in that projet, he did not feel himself now at liberty to state; but he believed no man would be inclined to say, that it must of necessity be an ultimatum, because it was contained in a projet. Indeed one of the complaints which we had against the French upon that occasion was, that they wanted us, contrary to every diplomatic form, to give in our ultimatum first. He knew that it was the opinion, at that time, of a noble marquis to whom he had before alluded, and who had rendered such essential services in India; but he was wrong in particularising India, for there was scarcely a quarter of the globe in which this country had not derived important advantages from the exalted talents and virtues of that noble person, who was now about to receive the last reward of his services, in putting the finishing hand to a treaty which would give peace to the world, after a war in which he had had so large a share in averting from this country the dangers which threatened the most vulnerable part of our possessions—

Digitized by Google

that the retaining of Cochin was necessary to the security of our Indian dominions. But the noble marquis, he was sure, did not now retain the same opinion, because its importance then depended upon its being a frontier post, to secure us from an enemy whom we had since completely destroyed. It would not surely be contended for a moment, that, when the power of Tippoo Saltaun was entire, and when there was a direct road from his dominions into our's, Cochin was not of infinitely more importance than it could be now when his dominions were in our possession. He did not wish to give a ludicrous illustration of this argument: but he was really so much astonished at what had been said upon this point, that he could not help stating a case which appeared to him directly in point with the present. If we were to look into the ancient periods of our history, when Scotland was a separate kingdom, hostile to us, and in strict alliance with France, the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed was a place of the greatest importance to us as a fortified frontier post; but surely it could not be said to be of equal importance now, when Scotland and England are united into one kingdom. This parallel did not appear to him to be exaggerated; and if Cochin was of no importance as a military post, he was inclined to think that its commercial value was not very great. As to the advantages that we must derive from the possession of Ceylon, it was unnecessary for him to enlarge upon them; they were too obvious not to be felt by every body. With regard to the Cape, he had before stated his opinion of its value; but if we could not retain it without continuing the war, he thought ministers had acted wisely in giving it up upon the terms they had, because, in point of value, it was inferior to Ceylon and Trinidad.

He now came to the consideration of our situation in the West Indies; and he was decidedly of opinion, that, of all the islands which the fortune of war had put into our hands in that quarter, Trinidad was the most valuable; he should prefer it even to Martinico; undoubtedly as a protection to our Leeward Islands it was the better of the two, and, in point of intrinsic value, the more important. As to its value as a post from which we might direct our future operations against the possessions of Spain in South America, it must be felt by every one to be the best situated of any part in the West Indies. He had always been of opinion, that when it came to be a question merely of terms between England and France, we ought to retain the possession of one of the great naval stations in the West Indies, because our great want in that quarter was a naval port. The four great naval stations were Guadaloupe, Martinico, St. Lucia, and Trinidad; and those of Trinidad and Martinico were the best, and the former the better of the two.

He would now trouble the House shortly upon the subject of our allies. With respect to the Porte we had done every thing that we were bound to do: nay more—we had compelled the French to the evacuation of Egypt, and had stipulated for the integrity of her dominions. There was another object which we had obtained, and to which he did not think so much importance had been given as it deserved; he meant the establishment of an infant power, viz. the republic of the Seven Islands, which would perhaps have otherwise fallen under the dominion of France: this certainly was an acquisition of great importance for this country, not inferior, perhaps, to the possession of Malta itself. The only answer he had heard upon the subject was, that there had been a treaty concluded between France and the Porte, by which the evacuation of Egypt was stipulated for; but it could not be for a moment doubted that it was to the exertions of this country, and to the brilliant achievements of our army and navy, that the evacuation of Egypt must be attributed; and if France had, by a diplomatic trick, taken the advantage of this in two treaties, that could not derogate from the merit of this country.

With regard to Naples, we were not bound to do any thing for her. She had even desired to be released from her engagements to us; but she was compelled to this by an over-ruling necessity; and the government of this country, in its conduct towards Naples, had only acted in conformity to its own interests, and that upon large and liberal grounds, in endeavouring to repair the fortunes of an ally who had given way only to force. The hon. gentleman had argued, that we ought to have guaranteed to Naples her dominions, because, from the contiguity of the Cisalpine republic to Naples, the French might, in pursuance of the treaty, evacuate their territories one day, and

Digitized by Google

re-enter them the next; but if, from the situation of Europe, the present stipulation could not effect the security of Naples, it must be obvious that any guarantee would be equally unavailing.

With regard to Sardinia, the same observations were applicable; for we were not bound to interfere for her, unless it was to be maintained that we were to take upon ourselves the task of settling the affairs of the continent. But if we were unable to settle the affairs of that part of the continent which was in our own neighbourhood, with what effect of propriety could we attempt it in Italy? He was ready to grant that we ought to have claimed Piedmont for its sovereign, but could we have obtained it? Could we have procured its restoration, unless we could have disposed of the king of Etruria, unless we could have gained the Cisalpine and Ligurian republics, and driven the French from the mountains of Switzerland? Unless we could have done all this, it would have been in vain to restore the king of Sardinia to his capital, surrounded as he would have been by the French, and by their dependent and affiliated republics.

As to Portugal, every body must lament her misfortunes. But if it was right in her to ask to be released from her engagements to us, and if it was right in us to consent to it, then clearly we were absolved from any obligation to her, because an obligation which is put an end to on the one side, can, upon no fair reasoning, be said to continue on the other. As to the cession of Olivenza, it certainly was not of any great importance; but much had been said about the territory which France had obtained from Portugal in South America, and a considerable degree of geographical knowledge had been displayed in tracing the course of rivers; but gentlemen should recollect, that a South-American and a European river were materially different; for when you were talking of the banks of a river in South America, it was in fact very often little less than the coasts of an ocean. It had been said, "you affect to guarantee the integrity of Portugal, but it is only after France and Spain have taken every thing they wished for." But this again was not correct. The treaty of Badajos certainly did not give to France all she desired, because France, by a subsequent treaty, extorts another cession of still greater importance to her. What happens then? Portugal has given up this second portion of her territory by force, when you interfere and cancel the second treaty, and bring them back to the stipulations in the first. To you, then, Portugal owes this difference in the limits of her South-American empire, and to her you have acted not only with good faith, but with dignified liberality

The only remaining ally was the prince of Orange. From our ancient connexions, from our gratitude for the services of the house of Orange at the period of the Revolution, from his connexion with our sovereign, we could not but take a lively interest in his fate, and we had shown it by our conduct. He was not to be told of the guarantee of the constitution of Holland, without recalling to the recollection of the House the efforts we had made to defend, the unparalleled exertions we had used to restore him to his dominions. Even on the present occasion his interests had not been neglected. We did interfere for him; and we were told, that his interests were at that time the subject of negotiation, and that he would receive an indemnity. Even if we were to take that upon ourselves, it ought not to stand in the way of a great national arrangement. Thus stood the case with regard to our acquisitions and to our allies.

But it had been said, that we ought to have obtained more; that we ought to have obtained something to balance the great increase of power which France had obtained; that we have given France the means of increasing her maritime strength, and, in short, that "we have signed the death-warrant of the country." Now, in the first place, if we had retained all our conquests, it would not have made any difference to us in point of security. He did not mean to say, he would not have retained them all if he could; but they were no more important than as they would give us a little more or a little less of colonial power, and only tended to promote our security by increasing our finance. But would the acquisition of all these islands have enabled us to counterbalance the power which France had acquired on the continent? They would only give us a little more wealth; but a little more wealth would be badly purchased by a little more war: he should think so, even if we could be sure that one year's more war would give it to us; particularly when it was recollected, how

Digitized by Google

many years we had now been engaged in this contest. In speaking, however, about our resources, he would take upon himself to state (and he hoped the House would give him credit for some knowledge upon the subject), that if any case of necessity should arise, or if our honour should require another contest, we were far, very far indeed, from the end of our pecuniary resourses, which, he was happy to say, were greater than the enemy, or even the people of this country themselves, had an idea of. For the purpose of defence, or for the security of our honour, we had still resources in abundance; but they ought to be kept for those purposes, and not lavished away in continuing a contest, with the certainty of enormous expense. We might sit down in a worse relative situation than we were in at present, our object not obtained, our security not effected. As to the general point, we could not now think of balancing the powers on the continent. It was undoubtedly right, that if the French had conquered much, we ought also to endeavour to retain much; but in treating with France, we were not to consider what France had got from other countries, but what was the relative situation between us and France.

Gentlemen had talked of the *uti possidetis*; but France had not insisted upon the principle in her treaties with the powers on the continent; she had not retained the possession of all she had conquered, and consequently we could not be justified in insisting upou that principle. He admitted, that if a country had increased in power and territory faster than its natural rival (for, without speaking hastily, he must consider France in that character), that might justify the engaging in a confederacy to bring him back to his ancient strength; but if he had been able to dissolve that confederacy, that would perhaps be the worst reason in the world why, when we came to make peace with him, we were to expect the more favourable terms. It would be but bad reasoning, if one power were to say to another, "You are much too powerful for us, we have not the means of reducing that power by force, and therefore you must cede to us a portion of your territories, in order to make us equal in point of strength." Gentlemen might undoubtedly wish this; but that which regulated wishes, would not regulate actions. Many things might be prayed for, that were hardly to be expected in reality. But he did not see that we were giving to the enemy all this colonial wealth and maritime power which had been represented; what we gave back was not only smaller than what we retained, but much of it was in a ruined state. He was therefore inclined to think, that, for many years at least, we should have the colonial trade, and that too increasing in extent and value. That we should not have been justified in asking for more, he did not mean to assert; but that we should have got more, or that we ought to have continued the war to increase our possessions, was a proposition to which he could not give his assent.

Allusions had been made to former opinions and language; upon this subject he should only say, that, peace having been restored between England and France, forbearance of language and terms of respect were proper; but it would be affectation and hypocrisy in him to say, that he had changed, or could change, his opinion of the character of the person presiding in France, until he saw a train of conduct which would justify that change. He would not now occupy the attention of the House by entering into a discussion of the origin of the war; the unjust aggression which was made upon us was established by recent evidence; but it was unnecessary to enter into it now, because, upon that subjebt, the opinion of the House and of the country was fixed. The great object of the war, on our part, was defence for ourselves and for the rest of the world, in a war waged against most of the nations in Europe, but against us with particular malignity. Security was our great object; there were different means of accomplishing it, with better or worse prospects of success; and, according to the different variations of policy occasioned by a change of circumstances, we still pursued our great object, security. In order to obtain it, we certainly did look for the subversion of that government, which was founded upon revolutionary principles. We never, at any one period, said, that, as a *sine quâ non*, we insisted upon the restoration of the old government of France; we only said, there was no government with which we could treat. This was our language up to 1796; but in no one instance did we ever insist upon restoring the monarchy; though, said Mr. Pitt, I do not hesitate to acknowledge, that it would have been more consistent with the wishes of ministers, and with the interest and security of this country. I

Digitized by Google

am equally ready to confess, that I gave up my hopes with the greatest reluctance; and I shall, to my dying day, lament that there were not, on the part of the other powers of Europe, efforts corresponding to our own, for the accomplishment of that great work. There were periods, during the continuance of the war, in which I had hopes of our being able to put together the scattered fragments of that great and venerable edifice; to have restored the exiled nobility of France; to have restored a government, certainly not free from defects, but built upon sober and regular foundations, in the stead of that mad system of innovation which threatened, and had nearly accomplished, the destruction of Europe.

Me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam
Auspiciis, et sponte meâ componere curas;
Urbem Trojanam primùm dulcesque meorum
Reliquias colerem, Priami tecta alta manerent,
Et recidiva manu posuissem Pergama victis.

This, it was true, had been found unattainable; but we had the satisfaction of knowing, that we had survived the violence of the revolutionary fever, and we had seen the extent of its principles abated. We had seen Jacobinism deprived of its fascination; we had seen it stripped of the name and pretext of liberty; it had shown itself to be capable only of destroying, not of building, and that it must necessarily end in a military despotism. He trusted this important lesson would not be thrown away upon the world. Being disappointed in our hopes, of being able to drive France within her ancient limits, and even to make barriers against her farther incursions, it became then necessary, with the change of circumstances, to change our objects; for he did not know a more fatal error, than to look only at one object, and obstinately to pursue it, when the hope of accomplishing it no longer remained. If it became impossible for us to obtain the full object of our wishes, wisdom and policy both required that we should endeavour to obtain that which was next best. In saying this, he was not sensible of inconsisteney, either in his former language or conduct, in refusing to treat with the person who now holds the destinies of France; because, when he formerly declined treating with him, he then said, that if events should take the turn they had since done, he should have no objection to treat with him.

§

He would now add but very little more to what he had said. He could not agree with those gentlemen who seemed to think that France had grown so much stronger in proportion to what we had. These gloomy apprehensions seemed to him to be almost wholly without foundation. This country always was, and he trusted always would be, able to check the ambitious projects of France, and to give that degree of assistance to the rest of Europe which they had done upon this occasion; and he wished it had been done with more effect. But when the immense acquisitions which France had made were taken into consideration on the one hand, it was but fair, on the other, to consider what she had lost in population, in commerce, in capital, and in habits of industry. The desolation produced by convulsions, such as France had undergone, could not be repaired even by large acquisitions of territory. Comparing, therefore, what France has gained with what she had lost, this enormous increase of power was not quite so apparent as some gentlemen on the other side seemed to apprehend. When he took into consideration the immense wealth of this country, and the natural and legitimate growth of that wealth, so much superior to the produce of rapacity and plunder, he could not but entertain the hope, founded in justice and in nature, of its solidity. This hope was strengthened by collateral considerations, when he looked to the great increase of our maritime power; when he contemplated the additional naval triumphs that we had obtained; when he looked to the brilliant victories of our armies, gained over the flower of the troops of France—troops which, in the opinion of many, were invincible,—when he reflected upon these glorious achievements, though he could not but lament our disappointment in some objects, he had the satisfaction of thinking, that we had added strength to our security, and lustre to our national character. Since the treaty which had taken place at Lisle, we had increased in wealth and commerce. But there were some important events which had given the greatest consolidation to our strength, and, as such, should not be forgotten. The destruction of the power of Tippoo Sultaun in India, who had fallen a victim to his attachment to France, and his perfidy to us, would surely be thought an important achievement. It had frequently been observed, that great dangers fre-

Digitized by Google

quently produced, in nations of a manly cast of mind, great and noble exertions; so when the most unparalleled danger threatened the sister kingdom, the feelings of a common cause between the people of both countries, had enabled them to overcome prejudices, some of them perhaps laudable, and all of them deep-rooted, and led to that happy union, which adds more to the power and strength of the British empire, than all the conquests of one and indivisible France do to that country. These were consolations which he wished to recall to the recollection of those who entertained gloomy apprehensions about the strength and resources of Great Britain.

If any additional proofs were wanting, to prove her ability to protect her honour and maintain her interests, let gentlemen look to the last campaign, and they would see Great Britain contending against a powerful confederacy in the North; they would see her fighting for those objects at once in Egypt and in the Baltic, and they would see her successful in both. We had shown, that we were ready to meet the threatened invasion at home, and could send troops to triumph over the French in the barren sands of Egypt, before a man could escape from Toulon, to reinforce their blocked-up army; we had met the menaced invasion by attacking France on her own coasts, and we had seen those ships which were destined for the invasion of this country, moored and chained to their shores, and finding protection only in their batteries. These were not only sources of justifiable pride, but grounds of solid security. What might be the future object of the chief consul of France, he knew not; but if it were to exercise a military despotism, he would venture to predict, that he would not select this country for the first object of his attack; and if we were true to ourselves, we had little to fear from that attack, let it come when it would. But though he did not entertain apprehensions, yet he could not concur with those who thought we ought to lay aside all caution. If such pplicy were adopted, there would indeed be ground for most serious apprehensions. He hoped every measure would be adopted, which prudence could suggest, to do away animosity between the two countries, and to avoid every ground of irritation by sincerity on our part. This, however, on the other hand, was not to be done by paying abject court to France. We must depend for security only upon ourselves. If, however, the views of France were correspondent with our own, we had every prospect of enjoying a long peace. He saw some symptoms that they were, though upon this he had no certain knowledge; but he would never rely upon personal character for the security of his country. He was inclined to hope every thing that was good, but he was bound to act as if he feared otherwise.

Mr. *Fox* rose and said:—At no time, Sir, since I have had the honour of being a member of this House, did I ever give my vote with more heartfelt pleasure than I shall do on the present occasion, in support of the preliminaries of peace between this country and the French republic. And I own, Sir, that I think his majesty's ministers, and the mover of the address, did very wisely in taking that moderate line, and in refraining from all those topics which might have diminished the satisfaction which gentlemen must feel in assenting to the motion now before us. Yet, Sir, for my own part, I have no hesitation in saying, that had even the word "honourable" been introduced into the vote, I should not have declined assenting to it; for I will be bold to say, that unless the peace be honourable, it ought not to come before us. Whether the epithets safe and honourable be convertible, I will not now inquire; but of this I am sure, that among individuals, and much more among nations, honour is the most essential means of safety, as it is the first, and I had almost said the only legitimate ground of war. With regard to another term made use of by the noble lord, I cannot so readily agree with him. I cannot conceive how the term glorious peace could be applied. A glorious peace can only ensue from a glorious war, and such an epithet I never can apply to the late war.

Those who have argued the subject before me have very fairly divided it into two heads: 1st. Whether this peace be preferable to a continuance of the war? this is certainly the most material point: and 2ndly, Whether a better peace could have been obtained? The last point cannot easily be ascertained. If we could have had a better peace without running the risk of continuing the war, his majesty's ministers would undoubtedly have been very blameable in not making a better. But I should like to have it proved to me, how ministers could have made a better.

Digitized by Google

Sir, I was glad to hear the noble lord, whose speech I admired so much in all the main points of it, lay down that liberal system of policy, that what is gained does not of itself make peace so much the better; nor what is not gained, make it so much the worse. We have gained Ceylon and Trinidad; valuable acquisitions both. We have not gained the Cape, and I am not one of those who regret that we have not, for, from its destination, we shall have all the benefits of that possession without any of the expense of it. Perhaps, Sir, I do not agree with the hon. gentleman, who considers any acquisitions in the Mediterranean as secondary and subordinate points to Ceylon and Trinidad. The noble lord, considering the subject in a commercial point of view, says the Dutch did not possess Minorca, and yet they carried on the principal part of the Levant trade. But it is not in this point of view that I contemplate the question. Desiring peace most ardently, and thinking and hoping it may be a lasting one, I still cannot put entirely out of my consideration the possibility of future wars between the two countries. In any such event, surely Malta would be a more important possession than either Ceylon or Trinidad.

From this digression I return to the question, Why are we to suppose that better terms of peace could have been obtained? I wish to know, Sir, what pressure could have been made upon France that would have induced her to consent to better terms. And here I cannot help repeating, that though I admired much of the noble lord's speech, the part I most admired was that in which he applied the epithet "unsatisfactory;" an epithet chosen with singular felicity to the state of the continent, fairly confessing at the same time, that nothing gave him any reasonable hope of much mending it. But it has been urged, that France could not hurt this country. Not hurt it! That nothing can be more chimerical than the project of invading this country, I am as firmly convinced as any man can be. But are there not many other points which, at this late hour of the night, I will not discuss? Is there any man so blindly fond of the union with Ireland, so widely satisfied with the measures that have been adopted with respect to that country, as to say that the danger of a French force being in Ireland is not at least greater than the danger of an English force landing in France? The only question then is, Whether by pressure of war we could prevail upon France to cede to us Malta or the Cape? Could we have prevailed upon her by pressure upon her colonies? No, for that had been already done. By pressure upon the European territory of France? That idea is absurd. By pressure upon her finances? Here, Sir, I cannot but admire the judicious conduct of his majesty's ministers. They have not sought to delude us by the jargon of of their predecessors, and by senseless assertions of the French being on the brink, and in the very gulf of bankruptcy. They had too much good sense to do it. They adopted another mode of conduct. They well knew, that, by insisting upon Malta or the Cape, they must have made peace on less dignified terms, or they must have continued the war. That we might have gone on with the contest, I am not prepared to deny. I am not blind to the resources of the country. I see one resource while I am speaking. The income-tax is only mortgaged for fifty-five millions of debt. It might have been mortgaged for as much more; but these resources, says the noble lord, and justly, ought to be reserved for the defence of our honour and our independence. I come, then, to this conclusion, that there was little probability of our gaining better terms of peace.

I proceed next to the question, Whether we ought to have accepted these terms, or to have continued the war? I know a noble earl who sits on the same side of the House with myself, has called the peace a complete surrender, a capitulation of our safety; but yet, in the progress of that noble earl's speech, I discovered that he begged to be understood as not preferring another year of war to what he calls this complete surrender. Sir, it happens to many gentlemen, in the heat and hurry of argument, to be guilty of a little oratorical exaggeration. The expression of the noble earl seems to me to be of that description. I confess, Sir, I thought myself to be the last person to contemplate another year of war. But I now find I am absolutely warlike, compared with that noble earl. Yet though I cannot go so far as he does, I am still of opinion that another year of war would have been dreadful. Let me put one or two plain questions to the House. Let me ask every man who hears me, what has been the state of the poor for the two

Digitized by Google

last years? What have we seen throughout the country, in every town and parish? We have seen the poor depending upon alms. We have seen the mass of the people living upon charity, all levelled by the most dangerous equality, an equality of claims to be fed; claims destroying true charity.—Charity do I call it? Sir, one of the worst features of the present times is, that charity loses almost its nature. The claims were irresistible. The miser felt it his indispensable interest to give, as well as the humane. The industrious and the idle, the honest and the dissolute, were all to be fed alike; for, however you might prefer relieving the former, you could not suffer the latter to perish. I think I shall not at this time of day be told, that this evil was unconnected with the war. Have not the events of the last three months established that connection. We have had a most abundant harvest, as well got in as it was plentiful in its produce. I know it did reduce the price of grain, and, in some degree, the prices of other kinds of provision. But we saw that the prices began afterwards to rise again, probably because the fall had been more rapid than was natural. But what was the effect as soon as peace came? The fall from that time was much more rapid and considerable than it had been from the period of the harvest to the peace. Let gentlemen contemplate this picture. Let them say whether the outlines of it be not correct, and then let me ask them, can any man doubt, under such circumstances, whether it be not better for the people to eat, than that we should possess the Cape, or even Malta, could we have gained them at such a price? Another question I would ask is, whether gentlemen ever remember any event that was received with so much joy as the peace with France? But I may be told, that that joy was much greater among the lower classes of the people. Be it so, for the sake of argument. Why, then, I say, that this is only an additional proof of their having connected in their minds the idea of plenty with the prospect of peace. But it is added, that this popular joy was indiscriminating, and that the people never stopped to inquire about the terms. Most correctly true, I believe, is this assertion. But what does it prove? It only proves that the people were so goaded by the war, that they preferred peace almost upon any terms.

Sir, there are many persons who think and lament that the peace is a glorious one for France. If the peace be glorious for France, without being inglorious to England, it will not give me any concern that it is so. Upon this point, the feelings and opinions of men must depend in a great measure upon their conceptions of the causes of the war. If one of the objects of the war was the restoration of the ancient despotism of France, than which I defy any man to produce in the history of the world a more accursed one; if, I say, that was one of the objects of the war, why then, I say, it is to me an additional recommendation of the peace, that it has been obtained without the accomplishment of such an object. My undisguised opinion is, that if the coalition for the restoration of the Bourbons had succeeded, the consequences would have been amongst all the kings of Europe a perpetual guarantee against all people who might be oppressed by any of them in any part of the world. All countries, therefore, must be benefited by the failure of such a project, but none more so than great Britain. To the people of this country the consequences would have been fatal. Refer to the page of history. Had the coalition in the reign of Charles 1st established such a guarantee, would the liberties of the people have been preserved against the house of Stuart, or would Hampden have gained the immortal victory he did? To come lower down: had such a guarantee existed in later times, would the Revolution of 1688 have been able to maintain itself? I say, therefore, that there could not have been any greater misfortune to the world than the success of that coalition for restoring the Bourbons to the crown of France.

Sir, the noble lord, to whom I have had such frequent occasion to allude, does not, I am sure, expect me to agree with him in opinion upon the earlier periods of the war. Upon those periods, and upon the situation of France at that time, I differ with him directly. I have always conceived that we carried on a war against the freedom and independence of France. Sir, I know I shall be told that France was the first to declare war; but this I contend is no proof of her having been the aggressor. We refused to hear an authorized negociator who was sent to us; we took no steps to procure reparation or disavowal of the acts complained of; and all writers that I have ever read upon the law of nations, agree

Digitized by Google

that the country which refuses to hear what another has to propose, is to be considered the aggressor. The right hon. gentleman who has just sat down, has urged it as a maxim, and I am not prepared to deny it, that whenever the executive government places us at peace with another country, we are bound to speak with decency of the government of that country. If this be true with respect to the conduct we ought to adopt after peace is made, is it not equally our duty to abstain from harsh and insulting language before war is declared? Let gentlemen recollect the language of that right hon. gentleman in December 1792. Let them remember what inflammatory topics he urged, what invectives he made use of at the very time he was proposing that we should abide by our system of neutrality.

Sir, the pretended grounds of the war were the navigation of the Scheldt, the decree of the 19th of November, and other acts of the French government. With respect to Holland, it was no *casus fœderis*, for she did not desire your assistance. And here, Sir, let me remind the House, that one of the indemnities we have obtained for that war, is from that very ally whom we pretended we entered into the war to defend. But, for my own part, I must confess that I always understood the object of the war to be the restoration of the house of Bourbon. Not that I mean to say that it was the *sine quâ non*; but I contend that they avowed it with confidence, prosecuted it with perseverance, adhered to it with pertinacity, and relinquished it with difficulty. But they now affirm, that, not being able to obtain what they wished, they contented themselves with securing what they could; that they had a second best object, a succedaneum to put up in case of necessity. Yet who amongst us ever thought that that succedaneum, that second best object, was Ceylon and Trinidad? Who ever imagined that they who had held forth such mighty objects, would ever have admitted the acquisition of an island in the East and in the West to be that "indemnity for the past, and security for the future," for which they had so obstinately and loudly insisted?

I come now, Sir, to the third division of the question:—the subject of guarantees. Suppose you had got, says the right hon. gentleman, a guarantee for Naples or for Piedmont, how would you have enforced it? I admit the justice of his conclusion; but surely I had no right to expect this from the "Deliverer of Europe." I had no right to expect that he, of all men living, would have argued against our interfering in favour of Naples or of Piedmont, because we had not the means of doing it successfully.—I have now, I hope, sufficiently convinced the House, that in the terms and tone of the treaty I perfectly coincide with the noble lord. I approve of the terms. I think the noble secretary has very wisely tempered firmness of conduct with moderation of tone. But farther than this I cannot go with him. I cannot agree with him upon the time in which the treaty was made. It comes, in my opinion, many, many years too late. I would put it to the House, whether, at the period when we were most railed at and reviled for advising pacific measures, any man supposes for a moment that peace would not have been made upon terms equally advantageous with these? Does any man doubt that France, upon the breaking out of the war, would have acceded to much better terms? Does any man doubt that she would then have relinquished Holland, and perhaps abandoned even her designs upon the Netherlands? Would she not have given us better terms, both in the East Indies and the West? I urge this, Sir, with the more earnestness, in order to repel the idea of our being forced into the war. I know there were some gentlemen who admitted that she did not wish to commence hostilities with us at that time, and who told us, that she meant only to give us the privilege of being devoured the last. But might we not, I repeat, at every period since, have obtained better terms of peace than we have done? Could we not have negociated with more effect after the surrender of Valenciennes? At length a new government was established, and a negotiation was entered into at Paris. That negotiation failed, from the extravagant pretensions of his majesty's ministers. A second negotiation was afterwards begun at Lisle. Whatever may have been said of that negotiation, I would ask, how could we hope for success from it, when it now appears that the sentiments of the members of the cabinet were so various and so opposite? when we find that one of those ministers now thinks that peace to be a good one which gives up the Cape; a possession which, another minister contended, could not be aban-

Digitized by Google

doned without committing a crime deserving the severest punishment. But that negotiation, we have been told, was entered into, not so much from any pacific inclination on the part of his majesty's ministers, as in compliance with the sentiments of the public. We have more than once heard them rejoice in its failure, and avow that they recurred to it for the purpose of facilitating the adoption of a solid system of finance. Such a motive operates now no longer. At length, in January 1800, the chief consul of France makes a direct overture of peace. What answer did we return? Why, that the most effectual mode of facilitating peace would be to restore the Bourbons; that, indeed, was not the only means, but it was left to the French government to suggest any other. Was it the most likely method to prove our pacific wishes to ask Buonaparté to cut his own throat; for the first effect of the restoration of the Bourbons would, in all probability, have been the sacrifice of his life? But were the other means at which we hinted, the possession of Ceylon and Trinidad? Would not Buonaparté at that time have given us up both these islands—aye, and the Cape into the bargain? We might then have had Egypt by the convention of El-Arish. The gallant Abercromby would not, indeed, have fallen covered with laurels in the lap of victory, nor would our brave army have acquired such immortal honour; but we should at least have had Egypt without the loss of blood or of treasure. And what would then have been the case in Europe? The chief consul might not perhaps have relinquished the Netherlands, nor the left bank of the Rhine. But in Italy he had only the Genoese territory: we had nothing then to resist to the south-eastward of the Alps, and the forces of our allies were victorious to the frontiers of France. Then did the right hon. gentleman ransack the English language for epithets of severity and invective against the man whom he now contends we ought to treat with such decorum. But here I must do that right hon. gentleman the justice to acknowledge, that he confessed he indulged in that invective because it pleased him, but that it would be no obstruction in his mind to any other negotiation which circumstances might render it proper to enter into with him. At that time the consideration of the want of the stability of the government operated with considerable power. I urged then, and still urge, that the question of the stability or instability of the government ought not to be treated as of great consequence. I recalled to the recollection of the House, that none of the convulsions or changes of the French revolution, none of the shocks and contentions of the different parties, had produced any material alteration in the relations which France established with foreign powers. She had, at an early period, made peace with Prussia, and with that power she sedulously preserved that peace during all the stormy times that succeeded the ratification of it. But, Sir, we were told by his majesty's ministers to pause. We did pause from January 1800 to October 1801, and we have added 73 millions of debt since the impertinent answer, for I can call it by no other name, returned to the overtures of the chief consul. In other words, Sir, we have added as much to our national debt in that short period, as the whole of our debt consisted of from the period of the Revolution to the seven years' war. This pause of his majesty's ministers cost five times as much as all the duke of Marlborough's campaigns.

But it is said, that the case was altered by the defection of our allies; and the noble lord asks us, whether we would trust to the chance of reviving a third coalition, and the consequent expenditure of blood and treasure? Sir, I say the experience of the first coalition would have been quite sufficient to have deterred me from attempting any other, and the argument would have applied with as much strength many years ago, as it does at the present moment. The noble lord next alludes to the principles and power of France. For my own part, I never had much dread of French principles, though I certainly have no slight apprehension of French power. Of the influence of France upon the continent, I am as sensible as any man can be; but this is an effect which I do not impute to the peace but to the war. It is the right hon. gentleman himself who has been the greatest curse of the country by this aggrandisement of France. To France we may apply what that gentleman applied formerly on another occasion—we may say,

> Me Tenedon, Chrysenque, et Cyllae
> Apollinis urbes,
> Et Scyron cepisse.

Digitized by Google

He is the great prominent cause of all this greatness of the French republic. How did we come into this situation? By maintaining a war upon grounds originally unjust. It was this that excited a spirit of proud independence on the part of the enemy: it was this that lent him such resistless vigour: it was this that gave them energy and spirit, that roused them to such efforts, that inspired them with a patriotism and a zeal which no opposition could check, and no resistance subdue.

If I am asked what my opinion is of the future, my reply is, that, to put us in complete enjoyment of the blessings of peace, small establishments alone are necessary. It is by commercial pursuits and resources that we must attempt to compensate for the aggrandisement of our ancient rival: to cope with him in large establishments, in expensive navies and armies, will be the surest way to unnerve our efforts and diminish our means. Sir, I am not sanguine enough, though I think and hope the peace will be lasting, to calculate on a seventy years' peace. But still I am sanguine to a certain degree in my expectations, that the new state of France will turn the disposition of her people to a less hostile mind towards this country. I do think that Buonaparté's government is less likely to be adverse to Great Britain than the house of Bourbon was. God forbid that I should insult a fallen family; but the interests of my country compel me to say, that the chief consul cannot have a more inveterate spirit, and a more determined hostility towards us, than the house of Bourbon had. It has been said with truth, that the trade of France has been nearly annihilated; but I believe, the accounts from the interior of France do not represent her to be in a desolate state; and for Heaven's sake let us not forget, that the revolution has produced the effect of removing many of those internal grievances under which France groaned under the old government. It has abolished the corvées, a most vexatious tax; the feudalities, the odious and unjust immunities of the rich from the payment of taxes; it has abolished the privileges of the nobility, not those privileges which place the nobility as a barrier between the crown and the people, but those privileges which enabled them to tyrannise over and oppress their inferiors: — in a word, the French have made those reforms which we did two centuries ago.

Sir, for my own part, I cannot help thinking that the encouragement given to the arts and sciences, the increasing patronage in France of agriculture and of commerce, will make the minds of the people more pacific. It is a notorious fact, that the joy with which the French received the communication of the peace, was quite as great and as sincere as it was in this country. The chief consul well knew, that in making peace he fulfilled the desires of the people whom he governs, as much as his majesty's ministers accomplished the wishes of the people of England. What, then, remains to be considered, but this affair of commerce? Many persons are fearful that our commerce will suffer from the competition of France. I have no such fears. As far as our trade can be attacked by the rivalship of France, I think that rivalship will do us good. If, as some of you think, the weight of our taxation will enable France to rival us, is not that, I would ask, an additional argument in favour of peace?

The right hon. gentleman who spoke last, alludes to the principles and power of France. Of the former he is no longer afraid, though he is of the latter. If this be the case, is it not rather strange that he should think of assailing principles by guns and pikes and cannon; but that, when he is afraid of the power of France, he would make peace? Sir, principles never were, and never will be annihilated by force. I never had so much dread as some gentlemen had of French principles. I never conceived that they would have much influence in this country. I never thought that Paris, under the dominion of Robespierre held out a very inviting example to the British capital. Sir, the French revolution was calculated to fix men's minds more eagerly upon the question of liberty. But, was the sword the best means of opposing it? Disgrace and defeat might have tended to weaken it in the opinion of many, but victory and glory only gave it additional currency and credit with the great mass of the people.

I proceed now to a subject connected with our domestic situation; I mean Ireland, which one noble lord seems to think has been treated with a delicate hand. Of the union with Ireland I will not at this late hour enter into an investigation; time will best show whether it be likely to strengthen the connexion between the two countries. But when we hear of this

Digitized by Google

mixture of delicacy and firmness, let me ask what delicacy there was in the burnings and massacres? The noble lord has been incautious in the selection of his words; he has spoken of indulgences to be granted to the people in consequence of the peace. Is the substitution of common law for martial law, or the restoration of the Habeas Corpus, to be considered as an indulgence? Sir, there were times in which these were considered as sacred pillars of the constitution, not as indulgencies. If they are restored to vigour, I shall receive them as a right. I cannot be grateful for them as a boon.—Sir, I have nothing more to say, but to thank the House for the attention with which they have honoured me, and to beg pardon for having trespassed on them so long. I rejoice at the peace—cordially, sincerely, heartily rejoice at it. I hope it will be lasting. I believe it will; but to the last hour of my life I shall never cease lamenting that it was not made years ago, when we might perhaps have had better terms, but when we could certainly have had as good as those which have been submitted to us this day.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that after the able arguments that had been advanced in favour of the question, it was difficult to find any topics that had not before been alluded to. It had always appeared to him, as well as to many others, that the duty of negotiation commenced when all hopes of continental aid in checking the power of France were at an end. His predecessors had been of this opinion, and had twice sought a negotiation, though their efforts had been unsuccessful. As soon, therefore, as his majesty had been graciously pleased to deliver the authority of the country into the hands of the present ministers, they had thought it necessary to follow the same example. They had commenced a negotiation, and their efforts had been crowned with success. A comparison had been made between the terms which were proposed at Lisle, and those which had now been agreed upon; but it should be recollected, that since the negotiation at Lisle, the national debt of this country had increased no less than 150 millions. At that negotiation it was proposed to restore to France and her allies all that had been taken from them; a measure that must have been more dangerous to us at that time than it could be at present, because Tippoo Sultaun was then in force, and in connexion with France. In the Mediterranean, we did not then stipulate for the establishment of the republic of the Seven Islands, which now form a barrier to Turkey on the eastern side. In the West Indies we were in possession of Cape Nicola Mole and Jeremie, in addition to our other conquests; them we agreed to give up, keeping only the Cape and Trinidad. Upon the whole, he was decidedly of opinion that the terms now obtained were more favourable for the country than those proposed at Lisle.—He then entered into an examination of the present articles, which he contended were calculated very much to effect the security of our Eastern and Western possessions. To those who wished to continue the war for the purpose of reducing the power of France, he wished to state, that another campaign could not be made at a less expense than forty millions, and a perpetual annuity (except for the operation of the sinking fund) of two millions per annum, in addition to our other burthens. Even certain success would not have been worth such a price. He perfectly concurred with his noble friend in thinking that we ought to watch with care any tendency to increase the colonial system of this country. He was by no means satisfied of the wisdom of those whose object seemed to be to prevent France from becoming a commercial power. He wished to see France possessed of commerce; he wished to see her possessed of interests which would make her conscious of our maritime power. He wished to see her possessed of interests which, in the case of an unfortunate rupture, we might have the means of attacking. A right hon. friend of his used to say, that in this contest we had gained all which we had not lost; but in concluding this treaty we had acted with the greatest honour and good faith to our allies; we had preserved all our ancient dominions, and had made important acquisitions both in the East and in the West. Independent of all this, an arrangement had been made with the powers of the North, by which our rights had been fully recognised and secured; and finally, that great and most beneficial measure, the union with Ireland, had been carried into complete effect. We had closed the contest with consolidated power, and with augmented means, which he was convinced would make the power of this country equal to that of

Digitized by Google

France. He was ready, however, to acknowledge, that it depended upon the wisdom of government and of that House, whether this peace should be a blessing or a misfortune. On the part of the king's present ministers, he could only say, that the peace which had been made honestly, should be kept faithfully. No encouragement should be given to any persons, whatever their character might be, to subvert the present government of France. It would require the utmost caution to accomplish all the objects which they had in view; they ought to adopt a line of conduct, not of suspicion and jealousy, but of prudence and circumspection; and he was bound in candour and fairness to state, that it would be necessary to provide new means of security, such as were never before known in time of peace. If he were asked, whether this was founded upon a suspicion of the sincerity of the enemy? he would answer, No; but he could not look upon the map of Europe, without being convinced that such was the conduct which their duty prescribed to them. The system to be adopted must be one plainly directed to the security of the country; not calculated to promote patronage or to excite jealousies. He flattered himself that when the subject came to be investigated, it would not be found difficult to adopt a system of defence, which would be fully adequate to the security of the country. He could not help expressing, upon this occasion, his sense of the danger to which this country would be exposed, if proper measures were not adopted for its security. There were many other points necessary to be provided for, but which it was unnecessary to enter into at present; nor would he, at that late hour, have troubled the House with his sentiments, but for the imputation which had been thrown out against him for keeping an improper silence.

The motion was agreed to without a division; and the House adjourned at half past three in the morning.

Nov. 4. Sir Edmund Hartopp brought up the Report of the Address to his majesty, on the preliminaries of peace with France.

Mr. *Henry Lascelles* said, that as he had supported the war, it became his duty to give his reasons for voting in favour of the peace. He had always considered, that the best way of opposing the politics of France, was by stemming the torrent of her military progress; but he did not now think it in the power of this country to prevent the acquisitions of France upon the continent. He was of opinion, that the glorious achievements of our navy had placed this country in a situation of honour; and considered that the exertions we had made, would be viewed by history as highly meritorious. Although he had given his vote for the preliminaries, yet, when he considered the state of France, he could not rejoice at the peace without a mixture of anxiety and apprehension; and in giving his vote, he had done it in full confidence that ministers would continue the military and naval strength of the country, upon that establishment which would prevent France from suddenly making any attempt against us; and that they would also keep a strict watch to prevent the effect of those principles which he considered the most serious evil against which we had to contend.

Mr. *Windham** rose and said:—Sir; in the present stage of this business, and in a House so little numerous, I am not disposed to take up the subject in the way in which I should have wished to consider it, had I been able, with tolerable satisfaction to myself, to deliver my sentiments in the debate of last night. Something, however, I wish to say, founded in a great measure on what then took place. All that I heard, and all that I saw, on that occasion, tends only to confirm more and more the deep despair in which I am plunged, in contemplating the probable consequences of the present treaty.

Notwithstanding some lofty talk which we heard of dignity and firmness, and which I shall be glad to see realized, and a happy quotation, expressive of the same sentiments, from my right hon. friend not

* "During the prorogation of parliament in 1801, the new ministers settled preliminaries of peace with France and her allies. This measure Mr. Windham regarded, not less in the terms than in the principle, as highly dangerous to the interests of the country. On the first discussion of this subject, which was upon an Address of thanks to his majesty, he was unable to deliver his sentiments; but on the following day, when the report of the Address was brought up, he pronounced the celebrated speech which he afterwards published in the form of a pamphlet, by subjoining to it an Appendix, which is valuable for the information it contains, as well as for the vigour with which it is composed." Amyot's Life of Mr. Windham, p. 48.

Digitized by Google

now present (Mr. Pitt), the real amount of what was said, seems to be little more than this:—that France has, to be sure, the *power* of destroying us, but that we hope she will not have the *inclination*;—that we are under the paw of the lion, but that he may happen not to be hungry, and, instead of making a meal of us, may turn round in his den, and go to sleep. This is not stated in so many words; but it will be difficult to show, that it is not the fair result of the arguments.

That I should have lived to see the day, when such arguments could be used in a British House of Commons!—that I should have lived to see a House of Commons, where such arguments could be heard with patience, and even with complacency! The substance of the statement is this. We make peace, not from any necessity actually existing (my hon. friends, with great propriety, reject that supposition),* but because we foresee a period, at no great distance, when such a necessity must arise; and we think it right that provision for such a case should be made in time. We treat, or, to take at once the more appropriate term, we capitulate, while we have yet some ammunition left. General Menou could do no more. General Menou could do no more in one sense; but in another he did, I fear, a great deal more,—a point to which I must say a word hereafter: he did not abandon to their fate those whom he had invited to follow his fortunes, and to look up to him as their protector. Both, however, capitulated; and upon the plain and ordinary grounds of such a proceeding, namely, that their means of resistance must soon come to an end, and that they had no such hopes of any fortunate turn in their favour, as to justify a continuance of their resistance in the mean time. The conduct of both in the circumstances supposed, was perfectly rational; but let us recollect, that those who stand in such circumstances, be they generals or be they nations, are, to all intents and purposes, *conquered!* I know not what other definition we want of being conquered, than that a country can say to us, "we can hold out, and you cannot; make peace, or we will ruin you:" and that you in consequence, make peace, upon terms which must render a renewal of hostilities, under any provocation, more certainly fatal than a continuation of that war, which you already declare yourselves unable to bear.

If such be the fact, we may amuse ourselves with talking what language we please; but we are a *conquered people*. Buonaparté is as much our master, as he is of Spain or Prussia, or any other of those countries, which, though still permitted to call themselves independent, are, as every body knows, as completely in his power, as if the name of *department* was already written upon their foreheads. There are but two questions: Is the relation between the countries such, that France can ruin us by continuing the war? and will that relation in substance remain the same, or rather will it not be rendered infinitely worse, by peace, upon the terms now proposed?—If both these questions are answered in the affirmative, the whole is decided, and we live henceforward by sufferance from France.

Sir, before we endeavour to estimate our prospects in this new and honourable state of existence, I wish to consider, for a moment, what the reasonings are, that have determined our choice, as to the particular mode of it; and why we think that ruin by war must be so much more speedy and certain, than ruin by peace. And here I will take pretty much the statement given by the hon. gentlemen who argue on the other side.

I agree, that the question is not, whether this peace be good or bad, honourable or dishonourable, adequate or inadequate; whether it places us in a situation better or worse, than we had reason to expect, or than we were in before the war. All these are parts of the question, and many of them very material parts; but the question itself is, whether the peace now proposed, such as it is, be better, or not, than a continuation of hostilities?—Whether, according to a familiar mode of speech, we may not go farther and fare worse?—Whether, to take the same form in a manner somewhat more developed and correct, the chances of faring better, compared with the chances of faring worse, and including the certainty of the intermediate evils, do not render it adviseable upon the whole that we should rest contented where we are.

This I take to be the statement of the question, on the present, and on all simi-

* It would have been too much to have urged the plea of poverty in a country, which was at that moment exciting the envy and jealousy of all the world by its exorbitant wealth.

Digitized by Google

lar occasions; nor do I know of any addition necessary to be made, except to observe, that in estimating the terms of peace in the manner here proposed, you are not merely to consider the physical force, or pecuniary value, of the objects concerned, but also the effect which peace made in such and such circumstances, is likely to have on the character and estimation of the country; a species of possession, which, though neither tangible nor visible, is as much a part of national strength, and has as real a value, as any thing that can be turned into pounds and shillings, that can be sold by the score or hundred, or weighed out in avoirdupois. Accordingly a statesman, acting for a great country, may very well be in the situation of saying,—I would make peace at this time, if nothing more were in question, than the value of the objects now offered me, compared with those which I may hope to obtain: but when I consider what the effect is, which peace, made in the present circumstances, will have upon the estimation of the country; what the weakness is which it will betray; what the suspicions it will excite; what the distrust and alienation it will produce, in the minds of all the surrounding nations; how it will lower us in their eyes; how it will teach them universally to fly from connexion with a country, which neither protects its friends, nor seems any longer capable of protecting itself, in order to turn to those, who, while their vengeance is terrible, will not suffer a hair of the head to be touched, of any who will put themselves under their protection; —when I consider these consequences, not less real, or permanent, or extensive, than those which present themselves in the shape of territorial strength or commercial resources, I must reject these terms, which otherwise I should feel disposed to accept, and say, that, putting character into the scale, the inclination of the balance is decidedly the other way.

Sir, there is in all this nothing new or refined, or more than will be admitted by every one in words; though there seems so little disposition to adhere to it in fact. —If we refer to the practice of only our own time, what was the case of the Falkland Islands and Nootka? Was it the value of these objects, that we were going to war for? The one was a barren rock, an object of competition for nothing but seals and sea-gulls; the other a point of land in a wilderness, where some obscure, though spirited, adventurers had hoped that they might in time establish a trade with the savages for furs. Were these objects to involve nations in wars? If there was a question of their doing so, it was because considerations of a far different kind were attached to them—considerations of national honour and dignity; between which and the objects themselves, there may often be no more proportion, than between the picture of a great master, and the canvas on which it is painted.

If I wished for authorities upon such a subject, I need go no farther than to the hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox), who has recurred to a sentiment produced by him formerly with something of paradoxical exaggeration (though true in the main), namely that wars for points of honour are really the only rational and prudential wars in which a country can engage. Much of the same sort is the sentiment of another popular teacher, Junius, who, upon the subject of these very Falkland islands, says, in terms which it may be worth while to quote, not for the merit of the language, nor the authority of the writer,—though neither of them without their value,—but to show what were once the feelings of Englishmen, and what the topics chosen by a writer, whose object it was to recommend himself to the people: "To depart in the minutest article, from the nicety and strictness of punctilio, is as dangerous to national honour, as it is to female virtue. The woman who admits of one familiarity, seldom knows where to stop, or what to refuse; and when the counsels of a great country give way in a single instance, when they are once inclined to submission, every step accelerates the rapidity of their descent!"

We are not therefore, according to the present fashion, to fall to calculating, and to ask ourselves, what is the value at market of such and such an object, and how much it will cost us to obtain it. If these objects alone were at stake, I should admit the principle in its full force; and should be among the first to declare, that no object of mere pecuniary value could ever be worth obtaining at the price of a war; but when particular points of honour are at stake, as at Nootka or the Falkland islands (without inquiring, whether in those cases the point of honour was either well chosen, or rightly estimated); and still more, where general impression, where universal estimation, where the conception

Digitized by Google

to be formed of the feelings, temper, power, policy, and views of a great nation are in question, there to talk of calculating the loss or profit of possessions to which these considerations may be attached by their price at market, or the value of their fee-simple, is like the idea of Dr. Swift, when he is comparing the grants to the duke of Marlborough, with the rewards of a Roman conqueror, and estimates the crown of laurel at two-pence.

The first question for a great country to ask itself,—the first in point of order and the first in consequence,—is this: is the part which I am about to act consonant to that high estimation which I have hitherto maintained among the nations of the world? Will my reputation suffer?*—whether that reputation relate to the supposed extent of its means, to the vigour and wisdom of its counsels, or to the uprightness of its intentions. If, in any of these ways, the country is to sustain a loss of character; if the effect of what is proposed be to render it less respected, less looked up to, less trusted, less feared; if its firmness in times of trial, its fidelity to its engagements, its steady adherence to its purposes through all fortunes are to be called in question; it must be a strong necessity indeed, stronger than any which I believe to exist in the present instance, that ought to induce it even to listen to counsel liable to be attended with any of these consequences. It must be a weighty danger, that in the scales of a great country, can be allowed to balance the loss of any part of its dignity. What then shall we say of a country, which, abandoning from the outset every consideration of this sort, will not wait till it becomes insecure by ceasing to be respectable, but becomes unrespectable by ceasing to be secure? Which drops at once at the feet of its rival? Which begins by a complete surrender of its security; and suffers fame, character, dignity and every thing else to go along with it?

Whether such is the situation of this country, we shall judge better by taking a short view of the terms of the proposed peace. The description of these is simple and easy:—France gives nothing, and, excepting Trinidad, and Ceylon, England gives every thing. If it were of any consequence to state what in diplomatic language was the basis of this treaty, we must say, that it had no one basis; but that it was the *status quo*, on the part of England, with the two exceptions in its favour, of Ceylon and Trinidad; and the *uti possidetis*, with the addition of all the other English conquests, on the part of France. But what may be the technical description of the treaty, is, comparatively, of little importance. It is the result that is material, and the extent of power and territory, now, by whatever means, actually remaining in the hands of France. The enumeration of this, liable indeed in part to the disputed, but upon the whole sufficiently correct, may be made as follows:

In Europe.—France possesses the whole of the continent,* with the exception of

* The answer to be given to this question, in the case of the present treaty, will be best ascertained perhaps by recurring to what happened when the terms of the treaty were first declared. It was some time before any body could be found to believe them. The first reporters, when they stated that every thing was given up, except Ceylon and Trinidad; that Demerara, Cochin, the Cape, Malta, all were gone; were treated as persons who were joking, or who were themselves the dupes of some idle joke put about by the opposition. Nobody could believe that the terms of the treaty were in reality such as that description represented them. On the continent, where the speculations are apt to be more refined; after some time given to disbelief, the difficulty was solved by the supposition of secret articles. "Some great advantages were to be secured to Great Britain of another kind:" "Buonaparté was to abdicate:" "Louis the 18th was to be restored:" &c. &c. It never entered the thought of any one, that the state of things was finally to prove, what it appeared in the first instance; and that from mere impatience of contest, from sheer impotence of mind, Great Britain had thus suddenly stopped in her career, dropped down as in a fit, and, abandoning all her means of defence, was rolling herself in the dust at the feet of her adversary, regardless of what in future was to become of her, and looking to nothing but such temporary respite, as "the satiate fury" of the foe, or some feeling still more degrading to her, might happen to yield.

* This position will not be thought to have become less commanding by the completion of an event, which, lost as this country is to all feeling of its situation, does seem to have produced some slight sensation, namely, the extinction of the Cisalpine Republic, and the reproduction of it under the new form and title of the Italian. Those who before doubted, to what degree Buonaparté was master of Europe, may find here wherewithal to settle their opinion. It is not the mere assumption

*

Digitized by Google

Russia and Austria. If it be said, that parts of Germany, and the northern courts of Denmark and Sweden are not fairly described as being immediately under the control of France, we must balance this consideration by remarking, the influence which France possesses in these governments, and the commanding position which she occupies with respect to Austria, by the possession of Switzerland and Mantua, and those countries which have been considered always, and twice in the course of the present war, have proved to be the direct inlet into the heart of her dominions.

In Asia,—Pondichery, Mahé, Cochin, Negapatam, the Spice Islands.

In Africa,—the Cape of Good Hope, Goree, Senegal.

In the sea that is enclosed by these three continents, which connects them all, and furnishes to us in many respects our best and surest communication with them, —the Mediterranean,—every port and post except Gibraltar, from one end of it to the other,* including the impregnable and invaluable port of Malta; so as to exclude us from a sea, which it had ever before been the anxious policy of Great Britain to keep in her hands,—and to render it now, truly and properly, what it was once idly called, the sea of France.

In the West Indies,—St. Domingo,*

---

of so much new territory, or of so much new dominion at least, over a territory already dependent; nor the new danger arising from thence to Austria (either of them circumstances, that in former times, would have set the continent in a flame), but what the state must be of the powers of Europe, whoever they are, when they can sit quiet spectators of this proceeding, without daring to stir a step to prevent it. The assumption of this territory, though it be only a change in the form of the dominion exercised over it, must by no means be considered as of little importance. As has been well observed (vide Cobbett's Register, vol. 1, page 114), the use to be made of a country, in any state of independence, however nominal, is by no means the same, as when that country is placed at once in the hands of the governing power. France is mistress, it is true, of Spain and Prussia, and of Holland, Switzerland, Genoa, Tuscany, and all the south of Italy; but not to the same degree of the two former countries, as she is of the others; nor of the others, in the same manner as she is of the new Italian Republic. There may be a difference of several weeks.

* Among the posts and ports included in this description, we must not omit to particularise the island of Elba, with its port, Porto Ferrajo. This little island, small in extent, but not small in consequence, and rendered nobly conspicuous at the close of the day, by the last parting rays of British glory, which fell upon it, was supposed by the provisions of the treaty of Luneville to have been left indirectly only in the power of France; inasmuch as it was expressly stipulated, that it was to form part of the territories of the new king of Etruria,—a king made by France; in the wantonness of her malice, and as a mockery of the ancient sovereigns of Europe. The possession of the island, however, in this way was not thought sufficient; and therefore, that nothing might be wanting to mark that perfect contempt of good faith which has never failed to be manifested by the republic in all her transactions with other countries, Elba was to be obtained by a secret treaty with the king of Spain,—the chief of the house of which the king of Etruria was a member. The consequence was, that when Austria in the treaty of Luneville, and England in the late preliminary treaty, thought that they had left this island, such as it had always been before, part and parcel of the duchy of Tuscany, they found it, to their great surprise, rising up against them, as a separate possession in the hands of France, ready to be employed for the more easy subjugation of Naples, and for whatever other purposes France might have to prosecute in that quarter of the world.—It is not easy to conceive an instance of more contemptuous imposition on one side, nor of more forlorn and pitiable acquiescence on the other.

* Great doubt seems to be entertained at this moment, whether France will or will not finally obtain possession of St. Domingo; and great exultation to be felt in consequence by those, who, a few months ago, upon the ground that the conquest of St. Domingo, by France, was necessary for the security of our own islands, had consented to so extraordinary a measure as the sending out an immense armament, from the enemy's ports, in the interval between the preliminary and the definitive treaties. The probability is, that France will succeed, so far at least as to keep possession of part of the island; but should she not, then all the terrors affected to be felt at the establishment of a black empire, will return with ten-fold force; for the blacks will remain masters,—and masters after having tried their powers in a regular contest with European troops,—not to mention the hostility which they may well be suspected to conceive against us, who after various treaties and negotiations, the nature of which may require hereafter a little examination, finally lent our assistance to the sending out a force, intended for the purpose of bringing them back to slavery. Should the other event happen, and France obtain possession of St. Domingo, it may then well be a question,

Digitized by Google

both the French and Spanish parts, Martinico, St. Lucie, Guadaloupe, Tobago, Curaco.

In North America,—St. Pierre and Miquelon, with a right to the fisheries in the fullest extent to which they were ever claimed; Louisiana (so it is supposed),* a word dreadful to be pronounced, to all who consider the consequences with which that cession is pregnant, whether as it acts northward, by its effects upon the United States, or southward, as opening a direct passage into the Spanish settlements in America.

---

how long we shall remain in possession of Jamaica. So little can ordinary men enter into that profound scheme of policy, which would give to your enemy at a peace, or even before peace was concluded, what you had yourself been artempting to acquire during the war, at the expense of more than ten thousand men, and probably of twice as many millions of money.

* What is here supposed is now found to be the fact. By a secret treaty settled with Spain, on the 21st March, 1801, but not to be declared till after peace with England, or till ministers should be found, who, previously to peace, would suffer France to do what she pleased, Spain cedes to France the possession of Louisiana, and with it, as is supposed, that of the two Floridas. It is impossible to pretend that this event was one which could not have been foreseen. It was foreseen by the treaty of Utrecht; it was foreseen by the fears of every reflecting American; it was pointed out to the people of America, nearly six years ago, not only as an event likely to happen, but as likely to happen in the very mode which we have now seen (vide Cobbett's Register, page 199.) Putting foresight out of the question, the fact must have been known, had the ministers here either dared to question France, or instead of allowing France to negotiate for her allies, insisted on treating directly with those powers themselves.

Dreadful is their responsibility, by whom these precautions have been neglected, and by whom these things have finally been suffered to happen. But the crime or madness of those who have caused these evils, is less to us than the evils themselves. France has hitherto reckoned her progress by states and kingdoms: she may now count by continents: she has established herself in the new world. By the possession of these countries, placed as they are, and combined with those which before belonged to her, she will hold, as by a sort of middle handle, the two great divisions of this quarter of the globe, and will brandish these continents like the blades of that tremendous instrument, which did such signal service in the patriot hands of lord Edward Fitzgerald.

The consequences of this acquisition in one of the two hemispheres (North America) are well detailed, in different parts of the work above referred to [See p. 44, 199, 253, and 265]. France, planted now in the same continent with the United States, cutting them off from some of their richest districts, extending her settlements behind them, gradually but not slowly, till the mouths of the Mississippi shall be united with the sources of the St. Lawrence, will soon make them feel the want of that security which they have hitherto derived from an intervening ocean: and against a new and unconsolidated mass of states, will finally effect that, which it required only ten years to accomplish against the old and well-compacted governments of Europe. In the mean-while we may employ ourselves in considering, what is likely to be her control over the conduct of America as respecting this country; what the danger to Canada, and to that portion of our trade, which is carried on with those countries; what the effect of a French establishment in Louisiana and the Floridas, joined to what France will have in St. Domingo, Martinique, and Guadaloupe, upon the whole of our West-Indian interests and possessions.

But it is on the other side, and towards the South, that the scene is most awful; where we behold the whole wealth of the new world lying exposed in goodly prospect, and France, with no other point to settle than the moment when it may suit her convenience to take possession of it. Buonaparté, established in Louisiana, has as ready an access to the treasures of the Spanish mines, as any banker has to his strong box. Thanks to those who have given him the key of them. The wealth of Shain will from henceforward, directly and immediately, and with no necessity for any intermediate process, be the wealth of France: and let no man flatter himself with the hope, that it will become in her hands, what it was in those of its former possessors, the means of enfeebling strength, and relaxing industry and exertion. In succeeding to the riches of Spain, there is no ground to hope, that France will succeed to her weakness or folly. She will better profit by the example of her predecessors, and will keep her wealth in a due and perfect subordination to the higher and dearer interests of her ambition. Her mines will be only the store-house of her power. She will see, in these dark repositories, nothing but a magazine of future wars; which, like winds from the cave of Æolus, will rush forth to sweep the earth, and level whatever may yet be found to oppose the final accomplishment of her wishes.

Unà Eurusque Notusque ruunt, creberque procellis
Africus, et vastos volvunt ad litora fluctus.

An open boat in the Bay of Biscay, with all the storms of heaven raging for its de-

Digitized by Google

In South America,—Surinam, Demerara, Berbice, Essequibo, taken by us and now ceded; Guiana, and by the effect of the treaty, fraudulently signed by France with Portugal just before the signature of these preliminaries, a tract of country extending to the river Amazon, and giving to France the command of the entrance into that river. Whether, by any secret article, the evils of this cession will prove to have been done away, time will discover.* In fact, (be that as it may), France may be said to possess the whole of the Spanish and Portuguese settlements upon that continent. For who shall say, that she has not the command of those settlements, when she has the command of the countries to which they belong;—*cum custodit ipsos custodes?* She has, in truth, whatever part of the continent of South America she chooses to occupy; and as far as relates to the Spanish part, without even the necessity, a necessity that probably would not cost her much, of infringing any part of the present treaty.

Such is the grand and comprehensive circle to which the new Roman empire may be soon expected to spread, now that peace has removed all obstacles, and opened to her a safe and easy passage into the three remaining quarters of the globe. Such is the power, which we are required to contemplate without dismay! under the shade of whose greatness we are invited to lie down with perfect tranquillity and composure! I should be glad to know, what our ancestors would have thought and felt in this situation? what those weak and deluded men, so inferior to the politicians of the present day,* the Marlboroughs, the Godolphins, the Somers, the king Williams, all those who viewed with such apprehension the power of Louis 14th; what they would say to a peace, which not only confirms to France the possession of nearly the whole of Europe, but extends her empire over every other part of the globe. Is there a

struction, does not present an image of more unequal contest, than Great Britain struggling with a power, which combines against her the old world and the new; which to the force of nearly the whole continent of Europe, to something in Asia, to much in Africa, and more in the West-Indies, adds the naval resources of the continent of North America, and the wealth of the Spanish mines.

All these latter dangers, be it remembered, are created solely and exclusively by the peace. While war continued, these resources could never have gone to the enemy; they might, at any moment when necessity had been pressing, or hope in Europe had become extinct, have been secured to ourselves. The fear of this was probably the cause which preserved so long to Spain and Portugal the nominal independence which they have enjoyed. But these advantages (we shall be told) could only be obtained by war; and war is ruin.—Not exactly indeed to every country; because to France it has proved the means of empire and greatness; and even in Great Britain, up to the period of the ninth year of war, the progress of ruin did not seem to be very alarming. We shall know, before long, what the efficacy is of that provision, which grave and sober men have made for the happiness and safety of their country, in peace.

* There is no chance that the evils of the peace in this respect will be done away, whatever may become of the particular cession here alluded to. Between the boundary settled by the treaty of Madrid and the boundary now conteded for, in whatever treaty this latter is to be found, the difference is so small as hardly to be worth disputing. Either will give to France the command of the river Amazon. In this view the French may possibly concede the point: unless indeed the assurances given by our ministers, that they meant to do so, may be a reason with them for maintaining it.

* There have always been, in the House of Commons, some half-dozen or dozen sensible men, who having found out, that Great Britain was an island, have been of opinion that all continental connexions are injurious, and calculated only to fill the pockets of those, who, in return for English guineas, had nothing to give but the valour and military talents of their subjects. As the progress of reason is slow, this party had remained for a century or more in a very obscure minority, opposed by all who for their wisdom or talents, or supposed knowledge of public affairs, had figured at any time in the history of the country. But oppressed as the party had long been, they have lived to see the day, when their opinions are at length triumphant; and when the ministers of the country, with the full approbation of parliament and of the nation, are settling a treaty of peace upon a formal recognition of their principle, and declare in substance, that Great Britain has no longer any concern or interest in the affairs and situation of the continent. It is only unfortunate, that time has not yet been given to evince the truth of this principle by experience. When it shall be seen that the renunciation of foreign connexions, and retreat into our insular resources, shall have produced no harm, but that, on the contrary, the power and prosperity of Great Britain shall have risen higher than before, then will this doctrine have received its full and final confirmation.

Digitized by Google

man of them, who would not turn in his coffin, could be sensible to a twentieth part of that which is passing, as perfect matter of course, in the politics of the present moment?

But to all these mighty dangers we have it seems one great security to oppose; not that degrading and bastard security to which I have before adverted, and to which, I fear, I must again recur—that France is *lassata* if not *satiata;* that having run down her prey, she will be content to spare it, and be willing for awhile to leave us unmolested;—but a national, sober, well-founded security, applicable to the supposition that she may not be wanting in the will to hurt us, but will happily not possess the power. This great security, we are told, is our wealth. We are, it seems, so immensely rich, our prosperity stands on so sure and wide a basis, we have such a pyramid of gold, so beautifully constructed, and so firmly put together, that we may safely let in all the world to do their worst against it; they can never overturn it, and might spend ages in endeavouring to take it to pieces. We seem to consider our commercial prosperity, like those articles of property, timber, marble, and others of that sort, which, however valuable, may be safely left unguarded, being too weighty and bulky to be carried away.

Sir, the first circumstance that strikes one in this statement, is, that odd inconsistency, by which a country that makes peace on account of its poverty, is to rest its whole hope of security in that peace, upon its wealth. If our wealth will protect us, it is a great pity that this discovery was not made long ago; it would have saved us many years of painful struggle; have kept in our hands a great additional portion of these very means of protection; and have lessened considerably the dangers against which such protection is wanted. But wealth, I fear, abstracted from certain means of using it, carries with it no powers of protection, either for itself or others. Riches are strength, in the same manner only as they are food. They may be the means of procuring both. But we shall fall into a great a folly, as in the fable of Midas, if we suppose that when we have laid down our arms, and surrendered our fortresses, our wealth, alone, can afford us any protection. I cannot therefore, for my own part, understand what it meant by this, unless it be, that by superiority of capital, and priority of market, of which I allow the effects to be immense, we might, if things were left to themselves, in a fair competition, in a fair race, still keep a-head of our competitors, in spite of all the multiplied advantages which France will now possess. This might be so; though it is by no means clear that it would. But the competition will not be left to its natural course.* This game will not be fairly played. Buonaparté is a player, who, if the game is going against him, will be apt to pick a quarrel, and ask us, if we can draw our swords.—And here, perhaps, it is time to remark the singular fallacy, which has run through all the reasonings of gentlemen on the other side; that, namely, of supposing that in discussing the present question, the peace, such as it is, the state which is to be contrasted with the continuance of the war.—They forgot, or choose that we should forget, that this peace may, at any moment, at the mere pleasure of the enemy, be converted into a new war; differing only from the other, by the ground which we in the mean-while shall have lost, and the numerous advantages which the enemy will have acquired. There is not the least reason why this treaty, if the enemy should so please, should be any thing more than a mere piece of legerdemain, by which they shall have got possession of Malta, have established themselves in all their new colonies, have perhaps re-entered Egypt, have received back twenty or thirty thousand seamen, and have otherwise put themselves into a situation to recommence the war, with new and decisive advantages. If they do not immediately take this course, will be, simply, because they will hope to succeed as well without it; or, because they choose to defer it till a more convenient opportunity: the means will, at every moment, be in their power.

Two suppositions are, therefore, always to be made, and two comparisons to be instituted, when we talk of the merits of this peace: 1st, That the enemy will choose to adhere to it; or, 2dly, that

* See *Etat de la France*, by Hauterive, a work published at Paris, in 1800, immediately under the direction of the French government, and universally understood to be intended as a sort of manifesto of their sentiments. See also the various regulations introduced for the prohibition of our manufactures, even in the interval between the preliminary and definitive treaties.

Digitized by Google

they will break it: and the two comparisons to be formed in consequence are, 1st, The comparison between a continuation of the war and a state of peace, such as peace will be under the present treaty; and 2dly, a comparison of the war, so continued, with such a war as France may revive at any moment after the present treaty shall have taken effect.

What the condition and feelings of the country would be, in this latter case, namely that of a renewed war, I need hardly point out. The dread in fact of what they would be, will operate so strongly, that the case will never happen. The country will never bear to put itself in a situation, in which the sense of its own folly will press upon it in a way so impossible to be endured. At all events, with its present feelings and opinions, the country never can go to war again, let France do what she will; for, if we are of opinion, that war, continued at present, must be ruin in the course of a few years, what do we suppose it must be, when, to replace us, where we now are, we must begin by the recovery of that list of places, which the present treaty has given up? France, therefore, will be under no necessity af going to war with us; and nothing but her own intemperance and insolence, and an opinion of our endurance and weakness, beyond even what they may be found to deserve, can force upon us that extremity. She has much surer and safer means of going to work; means, at the same time, sufficiently quick in their operation to satisfy any ordinary ambition; she has nothing to do but to trust to the progress of her own power in peace, quickened, as often as she shall see occasion, by a smart threat of war. I cannot conceive the object, which a judicious application of these two means is not calculated to obtain. A peace, such as France has now made, mixed with proper proportions of a seasonable menace of war, is a specific, for the undoing of a rival country, which seems to me impossible to fail.—Let us try it in detail.—Suppose France, by an arrangement with that *independent* power, Spain, similar to the arragement which, in violation of the treaty of Utrecht, produced the surrender of Louisiana, and of the Spanish half of St. Domingo,* should obtain the cession (which would be in violation of no treaty), of all the Spanish settlements in America: would you consider that as an occasion of war? Suppose Portugal, the integrity of whose possessions is in some sense or other guaranteed to her, but who is not prevented, I presume, by that guarantee from parting with any of them that she pleases, should choose, in kindness to France, to make over to her any of those settlements which she, Portugal, still retains,—would that, again, be a cause of war? By these two ways, without the infraction of any treaty, without any act which could be construed to be an aggression, much less which we should be inclined to treat as such, might France render herself completely mistress of the continent of South America. Is there any commercial claim, then, that France could set up, any commercial regulation which she could introduce, either in her own name, or that of her allies, of a nature the most injurious and fatal to our commerce, which we should make a case of resistance, and think of magnitude enough to involve the nation in another war?—The augmentation of her marine. To which professedly she means to direct all her efforts, and the increase of her establishments to any amount that she pleases; these are objects which it would be perfectly ridiculous to talk of, or to suppose that we should make the subject even of the most friendly remonstrance. Indeed, according to the modern doctrines of not interfering in the internal concerns of another country, I do not understand upon what pretence the armament of a state can ever become a subject of representation, since nothing sure is so completely an internal concern, as what any nation does with its own military or naval forces, upon its own soil, or in its own harbours. But setting aside these *smaller* objects, suppose France was to re-invade Egypt; was, without waiting even for the form of a surrender from the order, to take forcible possession of Malta; was to land a body of troops in Greece, and either in that way, or by

* A few weeks before the above discourse was delivered, this would have been a mistake, for the treaty of Utrecht equally provided against the cession of any of these settlements as against the cession of St. Domingo; but it is one of the distinguishing characters of the late preliminaries,—and a most alarming one it is—that contrary to the almost uniform practice, they revived no former treaties; so that the treaty of Utrecht, as respecting this country and France, may be now considered as abrogated.

Digitized by Google

succours to Paswan Oglow, was to overset the government of the Porte;—would you be able, on any of these occasions, to satisfy those by whose opinions it is now the fashion to guide the counsels of states, that an interest existed sufficiently strong to call for the interference of this country, to prevent the mischief much less to redress and vindicate it when done? Why, Sir, we know that in the present state of opinions and feelings, and upon the principles on which the present peace has been made, not only no one, but hardly all of these put together, would drag the country into a renewal of hostilities, though, as is evident, its very existence might depend upon it. The consequence is, that France is our mistress; that there is nothing she can ask, which she must not have (she has only to threaten war, and her work is done); —that all the objects of interest and ambition which France can have in view, lie open before her to be taken possession of whenever she pleases, and without a struggle: her establishments will accumulate round us, till we shall be lost and buried in them: her power will grow over us, till, like the figures in some of Ovid's Metamorphoses, we shall find all our faculties of life and motion gradually failing and deserting us:

———Torpor gravis alligat artus;
Mollia cinguntur tenui præcordia libro.

If, in this last extremity, we should make any desperate efforts and plunges, that might threaten to become troublesome, and give us a chance of extricating ourselves, she will call in the aid of her arms, and with one blow put an end at once to our sufferings, and our existence.

Sir, are these idle dreams, the phantoms of my own disordered imagination? or are they real and serious dangers, the existence of which no man of common sense, let his opinions of peace be what they may, will attempt to deny? The utmost that any man will pretend to say, is, that he hopes (and so do I) that the evils apprehended will not happen; and that great as the risk may be, he thinks it preferable to those risks, which would attend a continuation of the war. None but the most weak or inconsiderate, if they are not disaffected, or absorbed and lost in the sense of some immediate personal interest, will feel, when they shall well understand the subject, that there is any cause of joy or rejoicing.

Here it is then, that I must advert again to that topic of consolation (miserable indeed must our state be, when such are our topics of consolation), to which, in order to make out a case not perfectly hopeless, we are willing to have recourse, and which, more I believe than any reliance upon our wealth, does really support us, in the situation to which we are reduced. This is the idea, that from some cause or other, from some combination of passions and events,—such as no philosophy can explain, and no history probably furnish an example of,—the progress of the revolution will stop where it is; and that Buonaparté like another Pyrrhus,—or rather like that adviser of Pyrrhus, whose advice was not taken, instead of proceeding to the conquests of new worlds, will be willing to sit down contented in the enjoyment of those which he has already.

Sir, the great objection to his hope, to say nothing of its baseness, is its utter extravagance. On what possible ground do we believe this? Is it in the general nature of ambition? Is it in the nature of French ambition? Is it in the nature of French revolutionary ambition? Does it happen commonly to those, whether nations or individuals, who are seized with the spirit of aggrandizement and acquisition, that they are inclined rather to count what they possess, than to look forward to what yet remains to be acquired? If we examine the French revolution, and trace it correctly to its causes, we shall find that the scheme of universal empire was, from the beginning, that which was looked to as the real consummation of its labours; the object first in view, though last to be accomplished; the *primum mobile* that originally set it in motion, and has since guided and governed all its movements.

The authors of the revolution wished to destroy morality and religion. They wished these things as ends; but they wished them also, as means, in a higher and more extensive design. They wished for a double empire; an empire of opinion, and an empire of political power; and they used the one of these, as a means of effecting the other. What reason have we to suppose, that they have renounced those designs, just when they seem to touch the moment of their highest and fullest accomplishment? When there is but one country, that remains between France and the empire of the world, then is the moment, when we choose to sup-

Digitized by Google

pose that all opposition may be withdrawn, and that the ambition of France will stop of its own accord.—It is impossible not to see in these feeble and sickly imaginations, that fatal temper of mind, which leads men to look for help and comfort from any source rather than from their own exertions. We are become of a sudden great *hopers*. We *hope* the French will have no inclination to hurt us;—we *hope*, now peace is come, and the pressure of war, as it is called, taken off, that the French empire will become a prey to dissensions, and finally fall to pieces;—we *hope*, that the danger to have been apprehended from the example of the revolution, is now worn out; and that Buonaparté, being now monarch himself, will join with us in the support of monarchical principles, and become a sort of collateral security for the British constitution. One has heard to be sure, that *magni animi est sperare*; but the maxim, to have any truth in it, must be confined, I apprehend, to those hopes which are to be prosecuted through the medium of men's own exertions, and not to be extended to those, which are to be independent of their exertions, or rather, as in the present instance, are meant to stand in lieu of them.

Of this description are all those expectations which I have just enumerated; one of which is, that the French will fall into dissensions.—Why, Sir, they have had nothing else but dissensions from the beginning. But of what avail have such dissensions been to the safety of other countries? One of their first dissensions was a war of three years, called the war of La Vendée; in which, according to some of their calculations, the republic lost between the two sides, to the number of 600,000 souls. This was surely pretty well, in the way of dissension. Yet when did this interrupt for a moment, even if it might in some degree have relaxed, the operations of their armies on the frontiers, and the prosecution of their plans for the overthrow of other countries? As for changes of government, they have been in a continued course of them. Since the beginning of the revolution, the government has been overturned at least half a dozen times. They have turned over in the air, as in sport, like tumbler-pigeons;—but have they ever, in consequence, ceased their flight?, The internal state of the country has been in the most violent commotion. The ship has been in mutiny;—there has been fighting in the waist and on the forecastle;—but in the midst of the confusion somebody has always been found to tend the helm, and to trim the sails; the vessel has held her course. For one, therefore, I have no great confidence in the effect of these internal commotions; which every day become less and less likely, in proportion as the power of the present government becomes more confirmed, and as the people of France become more and more bound together by the common feeling of national glory, and by the desire of consolidating the empire which they have seen established. Such commotions may undoubtedly happen, and may of a sudden, when it is least expected, bring about some change favourable to the world. But it is curious to hear these chances gravely brought forward, as the best foundation of our hopes, and by those too, who a few weeks ago, while the war continued, would never hear of them, as entering, at all into calculation. It seems, that the chapter of accidents, as it is called, which could do nothing for us in war, may do every thing for us in time of peace. Whereas I should have thought just the contrary; that chances, such as are here intended, were not only more likely to happen in war, but, what is a little material, might then be better improved and turned to account. While war subsists, while armies are ready to act, while confederacies are in force, while intelligences are going on, while assistance may be lawfully and avowedly given, every chance of this sort may, if properly improved, lead to consequences the most decisive. In peace, all that fortune can do for us, falls dead and still-born. Nobody is ready, nobody is authorised to move a step, or stretch forth a hand, to rear and foster those chances, however promising, which time and accident may bring forth. It is not an answer to say, that such never have been improved. In regulating plans of future conduct, we must consider not what men have done, but what they may and ought to do. The only rational idea that I could ever form of resistance to that power, which unresisted must subdue the world, was, that it must be the joint effect of an internal and an external war, directed to the same end, and mutually aiding and supporting each other. All the powers of Europe could not subdue France, if France was united; or force upon it a government, even were such an attempt warrantable, really in opposition to the wishes of the people. On the other

Digitized by Google

hand, no internal efforts, unassisted by force from without, seemed capable of rescuing the country from the yoke imimposed upon it, so long as the several factions that governed in succession, could find means of securing to themselves the support of the armies. We are now required to believe, that what has hitherto failed to be performed by both these powers together is to be effected by one alone; and that with respect to any hope of a change of government in France, the war that has been carrying on for nine years has proved only an impediment! Such is the state of our hopes and opinions on that side.

But we have another hope, founded on rather a contrary supposition, namely, that Buonaparté, now that he is a king himself —and a king he is so far as power can make one—will no longer be an encourager of those absurd and mischievous doctrines, which, however they may have helped him to the throne, will be as little pleasing to him, now that he is fairly seated there, as to any the most legitimate monarch. Sir, I agree, that Buonaparté, like other demagogues, and friends of the people, having deluded and gulled the people sufficiently to make them answer his purpose, will be ready enough to teach them a different lesson, and to forbid the use of that language towards himself, which he had before instructed them in, as perfectly proper towards others. Never was there any one, to be sure, who used less management in that respect, or, who left all admirers of the French revolution, within and without—all the admirers of it, I mean, as a system of liberty—in a more whimsical and laughable situation. Every opinion for which they have been contending, is now completely trodden down, and trampled upon, or held out in France to the greatest possible contempt and derision. The hon. gentlemen on the opposition benches have really great reason to complain of having been so completely left in the lurch. There is not even a decent retreat provided for them.

But though such is the treatment, which the principles of "the Rights of Man," and of the "Holy Duty of Insurrection," meet with in France, and on the part of him who should be their natural protector, it is by no means the same, with respect to the encouragement which he may choose to give them in other countries. Though they use none of these goods in France for home consumption, they have always a large assortment by them ready for foreign markets. Their Jacobin orators are not to be looked for in the clubs at Paris, but in the clubs of London. There, they may talk of *cashiering kings*, with other language of that sort; but should any orator more flippant than the rest choose to hold forth in that strain, in the city where the great consul resides, in the metropolis of liberty, he would soon put him to silence, in the way that we see adopted in the sign of the silent woman. Buonaparté, being invested, in virtue of the rights of man, with despotic power, can afford to sanction the preaching of those doctrines in other countries, of which he will not suffer the least whisper in his own. While he is at the head of an absolute monarchy in France, he may be the promoter and champion of Jacobin insurrections every where else. The abject as well as wicked nature of Jacobinism in this country, which, while it would rebel against the lawful authority of its own government, is willing to enslave itself to France, finds no difficulty of allowing to him these two opposite characters; and I know no reason why we should suppose him disinclined to accept them.

I must confess, therefore, that I see as little hope for us on this side, as I do on the other. In fact, if I could believe, in spite of all probability, that there was any remission of that purpose, which has never yet ceased for an instant—the purpose of destroying this country—such belief, however produced, must be instantly done away by a view of the conduct of France, in the settlement of this very treaty. There is not a line of it, that does not either directly point to the destruction of this country, or, by a course a little circuitous, but not less certain, equally tend to the same object. What can France want with any of the possessions which she has compelled us to surrender, but with a view of rivalling our power, or of subverting it, or of removing out of our hands the means of controlling her farther projects of ambition?—Of the first sort are all her stipulations for settlements in South America and the West Indies: of the the second, her demand of the Cape and Cochin; and of the last, that most marked and disgraceful condition on our part, the surrender of Malta. What upon earth could France have to do with Malta, but either as a means of humbling us in the eyes of all the world, by the surrender of it, or of depriving us of a port in the

Digitized by Google

Mediterranean, that might stand in the way of designs which she is meditating against the countries bordering upon that sea? The miserable pretexts which are formed to palliate this surrender, and the attempt to cover it, in part, by the show of delivering that fortress to the order, though much the greater part of the order are now living in the dominions of Buonaparté, and many of them actually serving in his armies, are wholly insufficient, either to conceal our shame, or to disguise the purpose of the French in making this demand. But the circumstances of the negotiation, not less than the treaty resulting from it, show, in another way, the folly of those hopes, which are founded upon the supposed intentions or characters of the persons with whom it is made. It does not augur very favourably for the intentions of a party in any transaction, that there appear in every stage of it the clearest proofs of duplicity and fraud.—What do we think of the artifice, which signs a treaty with us, guaranteeing the integrity of Portugal; but previously to that, at a period so late, as to make it sure that the knowledge of the transaction shall not reach this country in time, signs another treaty, totally altering the nature of that guarantee? What shall we think of the candour and fairness, which in a treaty with us, proposes, as a joint stipulation, the evacuation of Egypt, at a time when the proposers knew, though we did not, that every soldier of their's in Egypt was actually a prisoner to our troops? Where was their good faith to the Turks, when, in the same circumstances, they knowing the fact and the Turks not, they took credit from the Turks for this very evacuation? Why, Sir, it is a fraud upon a level with any of those practised at a lottery-office. They insure the ticket, at the moment when they know it to be drawn. And are these the people, to whose generosity and forbearance, to whose good intentions towards this country, and above all, to whose good faith, we are to deliver over, bound hand and foot, the interests of the British empire, to be destroyed or saved, as they, in their good pleasure, shall think fit?

I say nothing here on a topic, however closely connected with the present subject, the character of the first consul himself*—a character hitherto as much marked by frauds of the most disgraceful kind, as by every other species of guilt;

* The topic here alluded to is so closely connected with this subject, that the argument is evidently defective without it. An opinion indeed prevails, and is insisted upon by persons of much apparent wisdom and gravity, that any inquiry into the conduct and merits of the first consul is unbecoming and improper; unsuited to the dignity of a great assembly, and incapable of being made conducive to any useful purpose. To many, however, it may seem, that just the contrary of this is the fact; that in the history of the world, an instance can hardly be found of any one, whose personal qualities were so much a subject of general concern, and consequently so proper an object of inquiry; and that the occasion of all others, when such inquiry must be most proper and necessary, was that in which we were preparing to sign a treaty of peace with the person in question, founded expressly upon our confidence in his character, and entrusting to the issue of our judgment in that respect, the whole of the interests, welfare, independence, and even existence of a great empire.

Without inquiring generally into the history of the person thus confided in, let us recur only to a few of those passages of his life, which apply most immediately to the trust, which we are here reposing. A detailed and most masterly exposition of these is to be found in Mr. Pitt's speech of the 3rd February, 1800, in which, among other particulars, an account is given of his proceedings towards the people and governments of the several states of Milan, Modena, Genoa, Tuscany, the Pope, Venice, and Egypt. Of all of these it may be said generally, and as it should seem without exception,—such was purposely the profusion of engagements, and such the uniform and systematic breach of them,—that not a single act was done, which was not in violation of some engagement, and certainly not a single engagement contracted, or profession made, that was not, in every part of it, grossly and in most cases instantly violated. The French rulers have, throughout, evidently acted upon the principle, that he who could divest himself at once of all moral feeling, and release himself from all moral control, must for the time have an immense advantage over those who should remain under the old constraints, and who might not be sensible immediately of the change which had taken place, or, when they were, might be long incapable either of adopting it into their own conduct, or of so correcting their ancient feelings and habits (the habit for instance of relying in some degree on men's assurances, yielding something to their professions, believing in part what they should solemnly assert), as to make themselves proof against its effects. Nobody has entered more fully into these views, or pursued them to greater extent, than the person of whom we are here speaking; whether when employed

Digitized by Google

but pass on to the question, which meets us at every turn, and seems to stop the progress of all argument, the great question—"What are we to do? The danger

in the service of others, as in the instances, which we were proceeding to state, or when he afterwards set up for himself, and turned 'these instructions' 'to plague the inventors,' —the people who now find themselves under his yoke.

In Lombardy, a proclamation, issued immediately upon his entrance into the country, and containing assurances the most solemn, of 'respect for property, respect for religious opinions,'—principles, which he declared to be those of the French Republic, as well as of the army, which he commanded,—was followed instantly by a succession of exactions, amounting to many millions sterling, and by such violations of every religious opinion and feeling, as could be intended only to produce, what it at last accomplished, the driving the people to something like resistance, and thus furnishing a pretext (unsupported as it was to the last, even by the insurrection which had been provoked), of murdering eight hundred of the inhabitants of a single town, and delivering over the country to military plunder and execution.

In Modena, the proceedings, though upon a smaller scale, were of the same cast and character.

In Tuscany, to the breach of the general rights of neutrality (that neutrality so prudently observed, as was declared in the House of Commons [by Mr. Fox], by the wise prince who governed that country); to the breach of a treaty made the year before by the republic, was added that of a positive engagement made a few days before by himself. In spite of all these rights, and treaties, and engagements, and for the sake of an act, which was in itself the grossest violation of one of them, viz. the seizing an enemy's property in a neutral port, he marched into the country with as little ceremony as if he had been taking up his quarters in a part of the republic; and having completed his work, agreed indeed to retire, but not till he had exacted from this unfortunate, though *wise* prince, certain conditions as the price of his departure, and among others a large pecuniary contribution, for the expenses which the French had incurred in thus invading his territories.

In Genoa, these breaches of treaty, and violations of faith, were diversified by a happy mixture of those measures, by which protection to the independence of states, is made to signify a forcible change of their governments; and defence of the rights of the people, the establishing over them a foreign and military tyranny. But as these proceedings, though equally a breach of faith with the others, seem to belong more peculiarly to the class which we have just noticed, we will say no more of them here; and for the same reason, as well as from the inutility of citing separate instances, where the whole proceeding from beginning to end is nothing but one continued instance, we will forbear to dwell upon all the flagitious violences, and cruel and scandalous outrages, which attended the invasion of the pope's states, in which, though breach of faith had no less a share than in any of the transactions before enumerated, it is lost and merged as it were, in the various other sensations of indignation and disgust, which the events of that period are calculated to call forth.

The last scene of these proceedings of the first consul, comprized within the period of his Italian command, lay in the states of Venice; and, as it happens commonly at the close of the peace, the incidents here seem to have become more numerous, and to possess something of a higher and stronger interest. The general description of them is, however, the same, 'a perpetual renovation of hope, and a perpetual disappointment;' professions of friendship followed by instant acts of hostility; assurances of protection serving only as a prelude to every species of violence; and a solemn treaty of peace, engaging to preserve to the country its government and laws, ending in the subversion of both, either by the immediate hand of him who signed the treaty, or, as happened in this instance, by the transfer of the country 'to the iron yoke' of that very power, the delivery of it from which was the professed object of his interference, and the ground on which all his proceedings were to be justified.

What happened on these occasions in Italy, was renewed afterwards, so far as respects fidelity to treaties and sincerity in negotiation, in all the transactions of a similar nature, in which Buonaparté was concerned, either as a commander acting with large discretionary powers, or, as placed himself, at the head of the republic. The detail of these would show, that mere change of time and place made no change in the character of the person, or of the system pursued. It appears by all, that good faith passed for nothing: that deceptions the most gross, artifices unheard of in diplomatic proceedings, were practised without shame or scruple. When a party was once engaged in a negotiation, and placed in a situation in which he could no longer help himself, it was in vain to expect that any regard would be paid to the professions, in which the negotiation began, or to declarations which occurred in the course of it. Any old engagement was set aside, or any new one foisted in, as suited the wishes, original or incidental, which France happened to entertain. Of all this proofs will be found, more or less, in each of the negociations and conferences, which took place during the period here considered; that is to say, from the close of the campaign in Italy in 1797 to the final settlement of what

Digitized by Google

is great; but how are we to avoid it? War cannot be eternal, and what prospect have we of reaching a period, when it may be terminated in circumstances upon

is called the peace of the continent; particularly in what passed at Luneville respecting the security to be enjoyed by Naples, and in the convention with the arch-duke at Steyer, relative to the armistice between generals Brune and Bellegarde.

But it is in Egypt, that the character of the first consul is to be seen to the greatest advantage. It is there that we are to look for it in its highest and most perfect state. It is in the rich and fertile plains of Egypt, under the heat of those more ardent suns, that his virtues seem to shoot forth with most luxuriance, and to acquire a spirit and flavour, unknown in the colder regions of Europe. We will say nothing here, of that gigantic contempt of good faith and public morality, which first conceived the project of the expedition; of the outrages which followed in the train of it; of the happy inversion of all right and justice, which treated as rebels, and consigned to instant execution, those of the inhabitants who presumed to defend their country against a foreign invader—an invader, whom none of them had offended, and whom half of them had never heard of, till they found him seizing upon their property, and putting to death all who dared to oppose him: we will pass over the massacre of three thousand prisoners, in cold blood, at Jaffa, and will consent to treat as doubtful the strange though hardly less authenticated fact, of his causing poison to be administered to the sick of his own army. The circumstance which most forces itself upon the attention, which most attracts the eye of the connoisseur in the midst of this vast and splendid collection, is that singular combination of all that is great, and all that is little; all that is great in guilt and mischief, all that is little and despicable in the means of its execution,—the pretence of having become a convert to the Mahomedan Faith, and the use to be made of that pretence for the purpose of committing an act of the most complicated fraud and treachery. Nobody conceives of course, for a moment, that faith, or religious opinion, had any thing to do in this proceeding from one end of it to the other. The case exhibits nothing but a renegade Christian, who is affecting not to be an Atheist, only in the hope that he may pass for a Mahomedan. The whole was a pretence, for the purpose of robbing an allied prince of his dominions. In this act, however, it is not the mere fraud and imposture that most excites attention: instances of that sort, in our police offices and criminal tribunals, are familiar to us every day. It is not even the horrid and blasphemous impiety of it: we have heard of Dutch schippers trampling upon the crucifix. What most characterises the transaction, what is its true distinctive property, is the singular and utter shamelessness of it; the total abandonment of all regard for character or decency, which could commit such an act in the face of day, with all Europe spectators and witnesses, but placed only, as he hoped, at such a distance, that they could not interpose in time, could not cry "stop thief," so as to put the parties upon their guard and prevent the robbery from being completed. Buonaparté knew, that what he did in Egypt must be known in six weeks to all Europe. He knew, that in Europe there was not a human being, man, woman, or child, who would be the dupe of this pretended conversion, or who would see in it any thing but a shocking and base contrivance to strip the Turks of Egypt. But he was content, that the transaction should be so seen. He thought, that this cheating the Turk would be considered as a clever trick, a droll artifice; that the galleries in Europe would laugh at this, just as the galleries in our theatres do, when any piece of successful knavery is going on upon the stage,—when Filch in the Beggar's Opera picks Mrs. Di's pocket. And, to say the truth, he does not appear to have been in the wrong in this expectation. Such is the deplorable baseness of mankind, such the abject homage which men are willing to pay to crimes attended with success, to wickedness united with power, that none of the acts committed at any time by the agents of the French government, seem at all to have hurt their reception in the world, either collectively or individually. Their oppressions and cruelties excite no indignation; their low and scandalous frauds no contempt; their treacheries no distrust. In the case of the person here in question, you would swear, that his perfidies became him, and that, like one of Horace's mistresses, the more false and faithless he showed himself, the greater was his train of followers among the admiring and adoring governments of Europe.

——— Tu, simul obligasti
Perfidum votis caput, enitescis
Pulchrior multò, juvenumque prodis
Publica cura.

There is a perfect contest for the honour of being betrayed by him. The examples of those unfortunate and confiding countries, who have been already seduced and undone, produce no caution, inspire no terror.

After the remark, made at the beginning of this note, it will hardly be asked, of what use is it to notice these facts? It is of some use to know betimes, the character of the person, who is in a fair way of becoming our master, and who, in fact, is so already, as far as relates to a perfect ascendancy over those who direct our counsels. But it is of great use in another view, to point out to notice,

Digitized by Google

the whole more favourable than the present?"*

such parts of the history of the first consul, as those which we have been speaking of. It is of consequence to know, who it is that particular persons admire. If it be true, that a man is known by his company (noscitur à socio) it is equally true, that some judgment may be formed from those, whom he extols and looks up to. What, it has been asked, must be the priest, where a monkey is the god? What must be the admirer, where the object of admiration, is a person capable of such a proceeding as the pretended conversion to Mahomedanism? It will be admitted, probably, that this is not to come in, in the heroic part of the character. But I wish to know, with respect to a large class of his admirers,—the enthusiasts of liberty, the assertors of rights, the respecters of the independence of nations, the abhorrers of war, the lovers of peace and pacific arts, the exploders of military fame,—what in their estimation is the heroic part, or what they would point out as the subject of their panegyric? Is it possible, that they can hold out to us, as an object of admiration, the character of a man, whose merit, whatever its amount may be, must in kind be that of a soldier and a conqueror; whose sole occupation has been war; the foundation of whose fame and power was laid wholly upon military exploits; who unites in himself, all that these persons would profess to abhor in an Alexander and a Cæsar; who has been at once the conqueror of foreign nations, and the subverter of the liberties of his own? These things show, beyond a doubt, what, for the greater part, these eulogiums on the character of the first consul really are.—They are, either the base abject homage paid by the generality of mankind to successful crime; or the insidious praises of men, who, under the mask of liberty, patriotism, and respect for rights, are seeking to gratify their own spleen or ambition, and preparing the downfall of their country. Whatever credit may be due to him for military talents, and whatever certainly is due to him for decision, boldness, vigilance, address, capacity for great though wicked enterprizes, it will be difficult to account otherwise than is above done, for the sort of praises which we hear, and the quarters from which they come.

* The manner, in which people seem to have posed themselves with this question, has been the ruin of the country. They never seem to have got the length of discovering, that if France was bent upon their destruction, they were and must be, in an eternal war, unless either France should change her purpose, or they would submit to be destroyed. With all their fears and complainings, they have never been sensible to above half their danger. They seem always to have supposed, that like the contests in use among our common people (till the wisdom of magistrates extinguished those remains of rustic chivalry), they could terminate this war at any time, by only declaring that they had enough.

Sir, the word eternal, which in any use of it is sufficiently awful, will undoubtedly not be least so, when associated with the idea of war. But I must beg leave to remind the House of a circumstance, of which they and the country seem never to have been at all aware, that the question of eternal war, is one, which it is not left for us to decide. It is a question which must be asked of our enemies; and is not less proper to be asked, if we could hope that they would answer us at the present moment, than it was before the signature of the preliminaries. The war depends neither upon conventions to be entered into between the two governments, nor upon acts of hostility which may be committed between the two people, by land or on the high seas; but on the existence or non-existence of that fixed, rooted, determined purpose, which France has hitherto had, and which we have no reason whatever to think she has relinquished—of accomplishing the final overthrow of this country. While that purpose exists, and shall be acted upon, we are at war, call our state by what name you please; and the only question is, whether France cannot work as effectually to her purpose in peace; and if peace is made in a certain way, infinitely more effectual than she can in what is professedly and declaredly war. I would really wish to ask, whether gentlemen have never heard of a people called the Romans, a set of republicans who conquered the world in the old time; and whom the *modern Romans* take as their model in every respect, but in none more than in what relates to the overthrow of this country? Among the nations that fell under the Roman yoke, there were but few whom they were able to fetch down at a blow,—to reduce in the course of a single war. All their greater antagonists, particularly the state whose fate is chosen as a prototype of our own, were not reduced till after repeated attacks, till after several successive and alternate processes of war and peace: a victorious war preparing the way for an advantageous peace; and an advantageous peace again laying the foundation of a successful war. This was at least the conduct of a great people; a people not

Digitized by Google

to be put aside from their purposes by every transient blast of fortune. They had vowed the destruction of Carthage; and they never rested from their design, till they had seen it finally accomplished. The emulators of their fortune in the present day, are in no less a degree, the emulators of their virtues; at least of those qualities, whatever they may be, that give to man a command over his fellows. When I look at the conduct of of the French revolutionary rulers, as compared with that of their opponents; when I see the grandeur of their designs; the wisdom of their plans; the steadiness of their execution; their boldness in acting; their constancy in enduring; their contempt of all small obstacles and temporary embarrassments; their inflexible determination to perform such and such things; and the powers which they have displayed, in acting up to that determination; when I contrast these with the narrow views, the paltry interests, the occasional expedients, the desultory wavering conduct, the want of all right feeling and just conception, that characterize so generally the governments and nations opposed to them, I confess I sink down in despondency, and am fain to admit, that if they shall have conquered the world, it will be by qualities by which they deserve to conquer it. Never were there persons, who could show a fairer title to the inheritance which they claim. The great division of mankind made by a celebrated philosopher of old, into those who were formed to govern, and those who were born only to obey, was never more strongly exemplified than by the French nation, and those who have sunk, or are sinking, under their yoke. Let us not suppose, therefore, that while these qualities, combined with these purposes, shall continue to exist, they will ever cease, by night or by day, in peace or in war, to work their natural effect,—to gravitate towards their proper centre; or that the bold, the proud, the dignified, the determined, those who will great things, and will stake their existence upon the accomplishment of what they have willed, shall not finally prevail over those, who act upon the very opposite feelings; who will "never push their resistance beyond their convenience;" who ask for nothing but ease and safety; who look only to starve off the evil for the present day, and will take no heed of what may befall them on the morrow. We *are* therefore, in effect, at war at this moment; and the only question is, whether the war, that will henceforward proceed under the name of peace, is likely to prove less operative and fatal, than that which has hitherto appeared in its natural and ordinary shape. That such is our state, is confessed by the authors themselves of the present treaty, in the measures which they feel it necessary to recommend to the House. When did we ever hear before of a military establishment necessary to be kept up in time of peace? The fact is, that we know that we are not at peace; not such as is fit to be so called, nor that in which we might hope to sit down, for some time at least, in confidence and security, in the free and undisturbed enjoyment of the blessings which we possess. We are in that state, in which the majority, I believe, of those who hear me, are in their hearts more desirous that we should be, than, in our present prostrate and defenceless situation, they may think it prudent to avow—in a state of armed truce; and then the only questions will be, at what price we purchase this truce; what our condition will be while it lasts; and in what state it is likely to leave us, should it terminate otherwise than as we are willing to suppose.

This brings us at once to the point. If we are to come at last only to an armed truce, would it not have been a shorter and better course, to turn our war into an armed truce, into which in fact it had pretty much turned itself, rather than to take the round-about way which has been now adopted, of making peace by the sacrifice of all the means of future war, in order afterwards to form an armed truce out of that peace? Let us state the account, and consider the loss and profit on either side.

The evils of war, are generally speaking, to be comprized under three heads: the loss of lives and the consequent affliction brought upon friends and families; the loss of money, meaning, by that, money expended in a way not to be beneficial to the country that raises it; and the loss of money in another sense, that is to say, money not got; by which I mean the interruption given to national industry, and the diminution of the productions thence arising, either by the number of hands withdrawn from useful labour (which is probably however but little material), or by the embarrassments and restraints which in a state of war impede

Digitized by Google

and clog the operations of commerce. I do not mean, that there are not in war, evils which may be said not to be included properly under any of the above heads; among which may be numbered, the distress arising from sudden changes of property, even when the persons who lose, and those who acquire, are equally parts of the same community. This, however, is an evil that will be more felt at the beginning, than in the later periods of a war; and will in fact be likewise felt, though in a less degree, by a transition even from war to peace. The enumeration, now made, however, may be sufficiently correct for the present purpose. And, with this in our hands, let us consider, in what so very violent a degree, the present armed truce, or peace, if you choose to call it so, differs from what might have been our state, in the case so much dreaded and deprecated, of a continuation of the war.

To take the last first,—the loss of national wealth by the interruption given to commerce and industry; such is the singular nature of this war, such the unexampled consequences with which it has been attended, that it becomes a question, and one in itself of the most anxious and critical importance, on which side of the account the consequences of peace in this respect are to be placed: whether, instead of balancing the dangers of peace, if such there are, by accessions which it will bring to our wealth and commerce, we are not rather called upon to prove some great advantages which peace will give us in respect of security, in order to balance the diminution likely to be produced by it in our commercial opulence. That our commerce will suffer at the long-run, admits, I fear, of no doubt. If my apprehensions are just, it is in the diminution of our manufactures and commerce, that the approaches of our ruin will first be felt: but is any one prepared to say that this may not happen in the first instance? We have at present, subject to the inconveniences which war produces, nothing less than the commerce of the whole world. There is no part of the world to which our goods do not pass freely in our own ships; while not a single merchant ship, with the enemy's flag on board, does at this moment swim the ocean. Is this a state of things to be lightly hazarded? Does the hope of bettering this condition, even in the minds of those most sanguine, so much outweigh the fear of injuring it, that these opposite chances can upon the whole be stated otherwise than as destroying each other: and that of consequence, in the comparison of war and peace, the prospect of increased industry and commerce, which in general tells so much in favour of peace, must not here be struck out of the account? On this head the question between peace and war stands, to say the least of it, evenly balanced.

The next of these heads, the first, indeed, in point of consequence, but the next in the order in which it is here convenient to consider them, is the loss of lives, and the effect which war is likely to have on private and individual happiness. No man can pretend to say, that war can continue upon any footing, however restricted the circle of hostilities, without the lives of men being liable to be sacrificed; and no such sacrifice can be justified, or reconciled to the feelings of any one, but by that which must justify every such sacrifice, however great the extent; the safety and essential interests of the state. But if ever there was a war in which such sacrifices seemed likely to be few, not as an effect of any choice of ours, but by the necessary course of events, it was that which we should have had to carry on in future with the republic of France.

The great and destructive operations of war, the conflict of fleets or armies, or the consumption of men in unwholesome climates and distant expeditions, had ceased of themselves. I know not what expeditions we should have had to prosecute, unless new cases should have arisen, similar to that of the ever-memorable one of Egypt; where, the same motives existing, we should be sorry indeed not to have the means of acting upon them. But in general, our fleets would have remained quietly at their stations, and our armies have lived at home: the whole question reduces itself to a mere question of expense; and that again pretty much to a mere question of establishment.—The great heads of war expenditure, the army extraordinaries, would, in most parts, have ceased; and in the rest, have been greatly reduced. The chief question will be, not between an ordinary peace establishment and a war, such as, from circumstances, ours has hitherto been, involving expeditions to all parts of the globe; but between a peace establishment, such as that which is now declared to be necessary, and a war, which had become, and

Digitized by Google

was likely to continue, merely defensive; in which we should have had nothing to do, but to maintain a competent force, with little prospect of being obliged to make use of it. The advocates for the present peace must find themselves always in an awkward dilemma, between economy and safety. We make peace in order to save our money: if we reduce our establishments, what becomes of our security? if we keep up our establishments, what becomes of our savings? Whatever you give to one object, is unavoidably taken from the other. The savings of the present peace, therefore, can be looked for only between the narrow limits of a high peace and a low war establishment; or, to state the case more correctly, between a high peace establishment and a war, reduced in the manner that I have described. I wish that a correct estimate were formed of the difference, in point of expense, between these two states; recollecting always that among the expenses of peace are to be counted the provisions necessary against the new dangers brought by the peace itself; the new dangers for example, which with Jamaica, and all our West-India islands are threatened by the establishment of the French in Saint Domingo, and other parts in that quarter of the world: the new dangers to which our empire in the East is exposed, by the reentry of the French into the peninsula of India, and the cession to them, for such in effect it is, of the Cape and Cochin: in general, by the free passage now given to their ships and armies into every part of the world, and the establishment of them every where in the neighbourhood of our most valuable possessions.

Against all these dangers war provided, as it were by its own single act. The existence of our fleets upon the ocean, with an Admiralty order "to burn, sink, and destroy," shut up at once, as under lock and key, all those attempts which are now let loose, and require as many separate defences as there are parts liable to be attacked. A fleet cruising before Brest, therefore, was not to be considered as so much clear expense, to be charged to the account of the war; without deducting the expense of additional troops and additional ships, which the absence of the fleet might require to be kept, for instance, in the West Indies.

With respect to home defence. Considering the little reliance to be placed upon the government in France, now subsisting; the still greater uncertainty with respect to any future government (such as may arise at any moment); and the increased defence necessary on land, in proportion to the diminution of our force by sea; I know not how we can remain secure with a military establishment, much less considerable than that which we should have had to maintain here in the case of war. —So much for the expenses of peace.

On the other hand, we must consider, what the reductions are that might be made to the expense of war, beyond those which the very scheme and shape of the war itself would unavoidably produce.

The expenses of our army as at present established, are excessive; but what should hinder us from adopting some of those expedients by which a country not more considerable than Prussia, under the regulations introduced by a former great monarch, is made capable of maintaining a military establishment superior to that of Great Britain?—The chief of those expedients, and that which we could best imitate, is, the putting at all times the half of the army upon the footing of militia, to be exercised only for a month or two, and to be at home for the remainder of the year. Other expedients might be suggested, if this were the proper occasion for discussing them.

It is true, as may be observed, that such a reduction of expense, if it can be at all effected, may be applied not less in time of peace than in time of war; and in a comparison, therefore, between the two, must be counted on both sides. But that circumstance, as is plain, does not do away the effect of what is here stated. If both sides are reduced, and reduced at all proportionably, the absolute difference, which is what we are here considering, will be reduced also; not to mention that, with a view to what will be the effect of the measure in other ways, such a reduction may be better applied to a large establishment, than it can to a small one. If an army of 80,000 men, for instance, may, for the moment, be reduced to half, because the remaining 40,000 will still be a sufficient force, it is not to be concluded, that a proportionate reduction might be made in an army of only half that number, when the remainder, left on an emergency for the defence of the country, would be no more than twenty thousand. Consider, therefore, when the reductions capable of being made, or certain of themselves to

Digitized by Google

happen, in a state of war, such as war might be expected to be if continued from the present time, and when the new and extraordinary expenses incident to this peace shall have been calculated, to what the difference between the two states will amount; and taking then this difference at its utmost, compare the money so saved, with all the evils and dangers which peace, as now proposed, will give rise to; or, if the modern fashion is to prevail, and money alone to be considered, compare the value of the sinking fund, created by this saving, with the difference, in point of mere expense, of the circumstances in which we shall be placed at the commencement of any future war, should France choose to put us under this necessity. By the result of these comparisons must the question be decided.

Should it so happen (and who shall say, that it will not?) that our commerce, instead of increasing, or remaining where it is, should fall off; that our manufactures should decline; that, from these and other causes,—such as a great emigration, and considerable transfer of commercial property;—and above all from the great loss of territorial revenue, the income of the state should be lessened, to a degree equal only to this proposed saving, then we shall have incurred all the dreadful difference to be found in our situation in case of the renewal of war, and all the no-less-serious dangers during the continuance of peace, absolutely for nothing.

I select this only as the case which may be considered as the most probable. In argument, to be sure, having already agreed to take at par, our prospects with respect to the increase or decrease of our commerce and manufactures, I am not at liberty to insist on this case, or upon the more fatal one of a greater and more extensive decrease, without allowing those who argue on the other side, to avail themselves of the supposition, that the sources of national wealth may possibly be in a great degree augmented.

At all events, however, and whatever be the extent of these expected savings, and the improvement to be made in consequence in our finances, we are to estimate the evils and dangers which are to be placed in the opposite scale, the chief of which I have endeavoured to point out, though in a very hasty and summary manner, in the observations with which I have already troubled the House. They may be classed, generally, under three heads:—The ascendency, which it is feared France may in time acquire, even in those sources of greatness, which we seem inclined to consider as a substitute for all others, our manufactures and commerce; supposing, as I am here doing, that peace continues without interruption, and even without any great advantage being taken, of the threat of a renewal of hostilities. Secondly, the effect to be produced, in a peace so constituted, by the continued use of this menace,—an engine of which it is difficult to calculate the force, applied, as it may be, to every point on which the interests of the countries are opposed, and for the accomplishment of every object which France may wish to attain. Thirdly, and lastly, war itself; begun of course at such moment, as France shall judge most advantageous to her, and when by a due improvement of the preceding period of peace, Great Britain shall have been placed in a situation to be least capable of resisting its effects. On these points, having spoken to each already, as far as the occasion seems to admit, though far short of what the subject demands, I shall detain the House no longer, but leave to every gentleman to form his own judgment on the extent and reality of these dangers, and finally to settle the comparison between these (with others connected with them) and the continuance of the war, such as war from this time might be expected to prove. The only head of danger, to which I wish now to speak, is one of a quite different nature; but so serious, so certain, so imminent, so directly produced by the peace itself, that I must not omit to say a few words upon it. This, is the danger now first commencing; and which may be conveyed in a single word, but that, I fear, a word of great import—Intercourse. From this moment the whole of the principles and morals of France rush into this country without let or hindrance, with nothing to limit their extent, or to control their influence. While the war continued, not only the communication was little, or nothing, but, whatever contagion might be brought in by that communication, found the country less in a state to receive it. The very heat and irritation of the war was a preservative against the infection. But now that this infection is to come upon us in the soft hour of peace; that it is to mix with our food; that we are to take it into our arms; that it is to be diffused in the very air we breathe; what hope, can

Digitized by Google

we suppose, remains to us of escaping its effects?—This, I used formerly to be taught, before the weight of taxes had lessened our apprehensions of French fraternity, was one of the consequences most to be dreaded in peace, in whatever form it should come, short of the restoration of some government, not founded on Jacobinical principles. But somehow or another, the very idea of this danger seems long since to have vanished from our minds. We are now to make peace in the very spirit of peace, and to throw ourselves without reserve into the very arms of France. With respect, indeed, to one part of the danger, the principles of France,—meaning by that the political principles,—we are told, that all danger of that sort is at an end; that in this country, as every where else, the folly of the revolutionary principles is so thoroughly understood, that none can now be found to support them. Jacobinism is, as it were, extinct; or, should it still exist, we shall have, as our best ally against it, Buonaparté himself.

Sir, I have already stated what my confidence is in that ally. I know that neither he personally, nor any other of the *free* governments that have subsisted in France, have ever suffered these doctrines of Jacobinism to be used against themselves. But I must again ask, on what grounds we suppose that France has renounced the use of them with respect to other countries? We have heard less, indeed, of late, of her principles, because we have heard, and felt, more of her arms. For the same reason, we may possibly hear little of them in future. But do they therefore cease to exist? During the whole course of the revolution, France has sometimes employed one of these means, and sometimes the other. Sometimes the arms have opened a way for the principles, at others the principles have prepared the object, as an easy conquest to the arms:—In the flight of this chain-shot, sometimes one end has gone foremost and sometimes the other, and at times they may have struck their object at once; but the two parts alike exist, and are inseparably linked together.

Nothing, therefore, can, in my mind, be more idle than this hope of the extinction of Jacobinism, either as an instrument to be used by France, should her occasions require it, or as a principle ever to be eradicated out of any community, in which it has taken once root. However true it may be, that the example of France ought to serve as the strongest antidote to its poison, and that it does so, in fact, in the minds of many; yet it is equally true, that in another view, and to many other persons, it operates in a directly contrary way,—not as a warning, but as an incitement. What I am now speaking of, is,—however, not the danger of the political principles of France, but the still surer and more dreadful danger of its morals. What are we to think of a country, that having struck out of men's minds, as far as it has the power to do so, all sense of religion, and all belief of a future life, has struck out of its system of civil polity, the institution of marriage? That has formally, professedly, and by law, established the connexion of the sexes, upon the footing of an unrestrained concubinage? That has turned the whole country into one universal brothel? That leaves to every man to take, and to get rid of a wife (the fact, I believe, continues to be so), and a wife, in like manner, to get rid of her husband, upon less notice than you can in this country, of a ready-furnished lodging?

What are we to think of uniting with a country, in which such things have happened, and where for generations the effects must continue, whatever formal and superficial changes prudence and policy may find it expedient to introduce in the things themselves.

Do you suppose it possible, that with an intercourse subsisting such as, we know, will take place between Great Britain and France, the morals of this country should continue what they have been? Do we suppose that when this *Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes*, when that "revolutionary stream," the Seine, charged with all the *colluvies of* Paris,—with all the filth and blood of that polluted city,—shall have turned its current into the Thames, that the waters of our fair "domestic flood" can remain pure and wholesome, as before? Do we suppose these things can happen? Or is it, that we are indifferent, whether they happen or not; and that the morals of the country are no longer any object of of our concern?

Sir, I fear the very scenes that we shall witness, even in the course of the present winter, will give us a sufficient foretaste of what we may expect hereafter; and show, how little the morals of the country will be protected by those who should be their natural guardians, the higher and fashion-

Digitized by Google

able orders of society. In what crowds shall we see flocking to the hotel of a regicide embassador, however deep in all the guilt and horror of his time, those, whose doors have hitherto been shut inflexibly against every Frenchman; whom no feeling for honourable distress, no respect for suffering loyalty, no sympathy with fallen grandeur, no desire of useful example,—and in some instances, I fear, no gratitude for former services or civilities, have ever been able to excite, to show the least mark of kindness or attention to an emigrant of any description; though in that class are to be numbered men, who in every circumstance of birth, of fortune, of rank, of talents, of acquirements, of every species, are fully their equals; and whom the virtue that has made them emigrants, has, so far forth, rendered their superiors! A suite of richly furnished apartments, and a ball and supper, is a trial, I fear, too hard for the virtue of London.

It is to this side that I look with greatest apprehension. The plague with which we are threatened, will not begin, like that of Homer, with inferior animals, among dogs and mules, but in the fairest and choicest part of the creation; with those, whose fineness of texture makes them weak; whose susceptibility most exposes them to contagion; whose natures being most excellent, are, for that very reason, capable of becoming most depraved; who, being formed to promote the happiness of the world, may, when "strained from that fair use," prove its bane and destruction; retaining, as they will still do, much of that empire which nature intended for them, over the minds and faculties of the other half of the species.* "The woman tempted me, and I did eat," will be to be said, I fear, of this second fall of man, as it was of the first. Sir, we heard much, last year, of the necessity of new laws to check the growing progress of vice and immorality. I suppose we hardly mean to persist in any such projects. It will be too childish to be busying ourselves in stopping every little crevice and aperture, through which vice may ooze in, when we are going to open at once the flood-gates, and admit the whole tide of French practices and principles, till the morals of the two countries shall have settled at their common level.

I must beg here, not to be told, that of this kind of argument the only result is, that we should never make peace with France at all, until the monarchy should be restored. The argument implies no such thing. That no kind of peace with France will be safe, till then, I am not in the least disposed to deny; but the nature of human affairs does not admit of our getting always what we may think most admirable. We must take up often with what is far short of our ideas, either of advantage or safety. The question at present is, whether, in either of those views, we ought to take up with the present peace; and among the evils incident to it, and immediately resulting from it, I state one, which, in conjunction with others, is to be weighed against its advantages; namely, the havoc likely to be made by it in our principles and morals. If any one should be of opinion, that this consideration is of so much weight, that war, almost upon any terms, is preferable to peace with a state, founded upon a declared atheism, and filled with all the abominations and pollutions certain to result from such an origin, it is not my business to dispute with him; but that is not the way in which the argument is applied here; nor is it indeed applied in any way, otherwise than as a consideration, making part of the case, and to which every body is to allow what weight he shall think proper. The misfortune of the country has been, that it has never seen and felt, fully, the extent of its danger. The country, speaking of it in general, and not with a view to particular places, or classes of people, upon whom the pressure of the war has borne with peculiar severity—has been so rich, so prosperous, so happy; men have enjoyed here in so superior a degree, and with such perfect freedom from molestation, all the blessings and comforts of life, that they have never been able to persuade themselves, that any real harm could befall them. Even those, who have clamoured most loudly about the dangers of the country, have given, at times, the most exaggerated representations of them, have really, and when their opinions come to be examined, never described this danger as any thing truly alarming. For *their* danger has always been a provisional and hypothetical dan-

* See, on this subject, the important facts and excellent reflexions contained in chap. 2, towards the end, and in other parts of professor Robison's valuable work, published in 1797, and entitled "Proofs of a Conspiracy, &c."

Digitized by Google

ger, such as we should be liable to, if we did not conform to such and such conditions; but as these conditions were always in our power, and are now, as we see, actually resorted to, our real and absolute danger was, in fact, none at all. "You will be ruined, if you continue the war; but, make peace, and you are safe;" and unquestionably, as there can hardly have been a period, when a peace, such as the present, was not in our power—if such a peace can give us safety, there never was a period, when we could properly be said to have been in danger. We had a port always under our lee; so that if it came to overblow, or the ship laboured too much, we had nothing to do but to put up our helm, and run at once into a place of safety. But my ideas of the danger have always been of a far different sort. To me it has ever seemed, that the danger was not conditional, but absolute; that it was a question, whether we could be saved upon any other terms; whether we could weather this shoal upon either tack? The port appeared to me to be an enemy's port; where, though we might escape the dangers of the sea, we should fall into the hands of the savages, who would never suffer us to see again our native land, but keep us in a state of thraldom, far more to be dreaded than the utmost fury of the waves.

I have never pretended to say, that there were not dangers in war, as unquestionably there are great evils; I have said only that there were evils and dangers, not less real and certain, in peace, particularly in a peace made on such terms as the present. For terms of peace, in spite of what we here talked, have something to do with rendering our situation more or less secure, even in those respects, in which they are supposed to operate least. In general, though terms, however advantageous, would not secure us against the mischiefs of French fraternity, and the infusions of French principles and morals, yet they would make a little difference, I apprehend, as to the effect which peace would produce in the feelings of Europe; as to the air of success and triumph which it would give to the enemy, and of defeat and humiliation which it would impress upon us; as to the consequences resulting from thence, even with respect to the propagation of French principles, but certainly as to the confirmation of French power; and, above all, as to the situation in which we should stand, should France choose to force us again into a war. The port of Malta, strong as it is, would not, literally, serve as a bulwark to stop the incursions of Jacobinism. Figuratively, it would not be without its effect in that way; yet there would be some difference, I conceive, at the beginning of a war, whether we were in possession of Malta or not; and in the mean while, the knowledge of that difference, in the minds of the enemy, and of ourselves, would be quickly felt, in any discussions which might take place between us, in time of peace.

The dangers of peace, therefore, are augmented a hundred-fold by terms at once so degrading and injurious, as those to which we have submitted; on any terms on which it could have been concluded, it would have had its dangers, and dreadful ones too; France remaining a revolutionary government, and being, as it is, in possession of Europe. Whether that evil must not ultimately have been submitted to; whether the hopes of change, either from coalitions without, or commotions within, might not have become so small, and the evils of war, however mitigated, so great, that we must have made up our minds, after taking the best securities against those dangers that we could, finally to have acquiesced in them, is a separate question, which I will not now discuss. But the time, in my opinion, was not come, when such unqualified acquiescence on our part was requisite; when we were to cease to inquire what those securities were; or when we ought to have taken up with such securities, if securities they can be called, as are offered by the present treaty. The great misfortune has been, that this question of peace has never yet been fully and fairly before the country. We have been taken up with the war; that was the side of the alternative next to us;—and have never yet, till it was too late, had our attention fairly directed, or, I must say, fairly summoned, to the dreadful picture on the other side. If we had, we should never have heard, except among the ignorant and disaffected, of joy and exultation through the land, at a peace such as the present.

Here, Sir, I have nearly closed this subject. One only topic remains, a most important one indeed, but which I should have been induced, perhaps, on the present occasion, to pass over in silence, if in one part of it I did not feel myself called upon, by something of a more than ordinary duty.

Digitized by Google

When a great military monarch of our time* was at the lowest ebb of his fortunes, and had sustained a defeat, that seemed to extinguish all his remaining hopes, the terms of his letter, written from the field of battle, were—"We have lost every thing, but our honour." Would to God, that the same consolation, in circumstances liable to become in time not less disastrous, remained to Great Britain! I should feel a far less painful load of depression upon my mind, than weighs upon it at this moment. But is our honour saved in this transaction? Is it in a better plight than those two other objects of our consideration, which I have before touched upon, our dignity and our security? I fear not. I fear that we have contrived to combine in this proceeding, all that is at once ruinous and disgraceful; all that is calculated to undo us, in reputation as well as in fortune; and to deprive us of those resources, which high fame and unsullied character may create, "even under the ribs of death," when all ordinary means of relief and safety seem to be at an end. I am speaking here not of the general discredit that attaches to this precipitate retreat and flight out of the cause of Europe, and of all mankind; but of the situation in which we stand with respect to those allies, to whom we were bound by distinct and specific engagements. I must be very slow to admit that construction, which considers, as a breach of treaty, any thing done by a contracting power, under a clear *bonâ fide* necessity, such as the other party itself does not pretend to dispute. If an absolute conquest of one of the parties to an alliance does not absolve the other from the obligation which it has contracted, so neither can a timely submission, made in order to avert such conquest, when the remaining party itself shall not be able to describe that submission as injurious either to her own interest, or to that of the common cause. If we were not in a state to say to Sardinia, that it was better for us that she should continue her resistance, rather than accept the terms offered her; then, I say, we are not in a state to consider her submission as a forfeiture of the claims which she had upon us. We have left Sardinia, however, without an attempt to relieve her, without even a helping hand stretched out to support or to cheer her, under that ruin which she has brought upon herself, with no fault on her part, while adhering faithfully to her treaty with us. I must call that adherence faithful, which has continued as long as we ourselves could say, that it was of any use.—The case of Sardinia is, with no great variation, the case of Holland also. Both powers were our allies; both are ruined, while adhering to that alliance; both are left to their fate. But Sardinia and Holland are two only of our allies; and placed in circumstances of peculiar difficulty. There were others, it may be said, more capable of being assisted, for whose security and protection every thing has been done, that the most scrupulous fidelity could require. Naples, Portugal, and Turkey, will attest, to the end of time, the good faith of Great Britain; and show to the world, that she is not a power who ever seeks her own safety by abandoning those with whom she has embarked in a common cause. Sir, if I were forced to make a comparison between the instances, in which we plainly and openly desert our allies, and those in which we affect to protect them, I should say, without hesitation, that those of the former class were the least disgraceful of the two; because our protection is in fact nothing else but a desertion, with the addition of that ridicule which attaches upon things, that endeavour to pass for the reverse of what they really are.

The protection which we yield to these unfortunate powers, is much of the same sort with that which Don Quixote gives to the poor boy whom he releases from the tree; when he retires with perfect complacency and satisfaction, assuring him, that he has nothing more to fear, as his master is bound by the most solemn promise not to attempt to exercise against him any farther severity. We know, Sir, what respect was paid to this promise, as soon as the knight was out of sight; and it is not difficult to foretel, what respect will be paid by Buonaparté (without waiting even, I am afraid, till my hon. friends shall be out of sight), to this solemn stipulation and pledge, by which we have provided so *effectually* for the security of the dominions of our good and faithful allies.

The ridicule of this provision, which in

* Though it was Francis 1st who, after the battle of Pavia, originally expressed himself in this dignified manner, the king of Prussia adopted and repeated the sentiment, upon occasion of his memorable defeat at Schweidnitz. See Ann. Reg. for the year 1761.

Digitized by Google

any case would be sufficiently strong, has, undoubtedly, in the case of Turkey, something of a higher and livelier relish; Turkey being the power, in whose instance, and with respect to precisely the same party, the total insufficiency and nullity of such engagements has been so strikingly manifested, and is still kept so fresh in our memories, by the very operations with which the war has closed.

So much as to our conduct towards those powers, with whom we stood in the relation of allies, according to the usual diplomatic forms; and whom the common policy of Europe had been accustomed to consider under these and similar relations.

But there was another body of allies, not ranked indeed among the European powers, nor possessing much, perhaps, of corporate capacity, but who, as men, acting either separately or together, were equally capable of becoming objects of good faith, and in fact had so become, though by means different, in point of form, from those which engaged the faith of the country, in any of the instances above alluded to:—These persons were, the royalists of France, wheresoever dispersed, but particularly that vast body of them which so long maintained a contest against the republic in the West; where they formed the mass of the inhabitants of four or five great provinces, far exceeding, both in extent and population, the kingdom of Ireland.* I mention these particulars of their force and numbers, not because they are material to the present purpose, but because they serve to obviate that delusion of the understanding, by

* The population of these provinces is by no means stated with exaggeration, when it is said "far to exceed the population of the kingdom of Ireland." It might be described with truth, as "nearly, if not altogether, equal to the population of Great Britain." From Caen to Bourdeaux, without comprising more in breadth than belongs properly to the royalist country, there is a population, according to the statement of Mr Necker, of little less than 9,000,000. In ascertaining the proportions of this population, which may be considered as royalists, we must distinguish between those who were only royalists in their affections; those who actively, though secretly, favoured the cause; and those who, at different times, openly appeared in arms. By the numbers of the last of these classes, by the manner in which they maintained themselves, and by the effects which they produced, we may form, perhaps, the surest judgment, though possibly a very inadequate one, of the general sentiments and dispositions of the country. If those, who have been most engaged in these scenes, and have at least the best means of knowing, may be relied on, it was a small portion of the inhabitants indeed, and those confined almost exclusively to the towns, who were not royalists in their hearts. But facts, and the inferences resulting from them, may after all be considered as the best criterion, especially to those who may not have the means of resorting to the testimonies which we have alluded to, or of appreciating the degree of credit that may be due to them. Of these facts the principal lie open to the observation of every body, and are of a nature little liable to be mistaken or misrepresented. They are —the length of time during which the royalist war subsisted; the armies which it obliged the republic to employ; the nature of the pacifications which took place in different parts of it; the anxiety which it evidently excited in the government, during the whole of its continuance; the interruption which it gave to the communication between the metropolis and the principal sea-ports—the transport of goods and passengers, and letters between Paris and Brest being sometimes stopt for a fortnight, requiring at times an immense escort, and being at all times attended with considerable danger, insomuch that officers going to join their ships often preferred a passage by sea, even at the risk of being taken by our cruisers;—these are the facts, which rest on no authority of individuals, and may afford some measure for judging of the degree and extent, to which the sentiment of royalism prevailed in this part of France. For facts of a description somewhat different, though of a character and magnitude not to be much concealed or disguised, such as the nature and progress of the war; the armies, which the royalists were able to bring into the field; the manner in which they employed them; the resources which they possessed; the energy which they displayed; for these, or other similar ones, the reader would do well to have recourse to an account (published here in 1796, and since translated) of Campaigns in the Vendée, by the republican general Turreau, the same, probably, who is now employed in something of a similar service in Switzerland, and who, though interested in some degree in magnifying the force of an enemy, whom he was employed to combat, and requiring in that respect, as well as in several others, to be read with some reserve and caution, may yet be relied on for the general substance of his narrative, and the principal representations which accompany it: and will afford to those, who may be new to the subject, much valuable information on the history and circumstances of this most extraordinary and affecting war,

Digitized by Google

which things, small in bulk, and filling but little space in the imagination, are apt to lose their hold on our interests and affections. The mention of them may, moreover, not be unnecessary in this House, where, I fear, from various causes, all that relates to the royalists is a perfect *terra incognita*, as little known or considered, as the affairs of a people in another hemisphere. The royalists were, however, a great, numerous, and substantive body, capable of maintaining against the republic a war, confessed by the republicans themselves to have been more formidable and bloody, than most of those in which they had been engaged; and of terminating that war by a peace, which showed sufficiently what the war had been, and what the fears were, which the republic entertained, of its possible final success. But let the numbers and powers of the royalists have been what they might; had their affairs been still less considered; had they been more disowned, discountenanced, and betrayed, than in many instances they were; had more such garrisons as those of Mentz and Valenciennes been suffered to be sent against them;* had they been less the real, primary defenders and representatives of that cause, which the allies professed to support; still there were our formal proclamations, issued at various periods, not expressly engaging indeed to make stipulations for them in case of a peace, but calling generally for their exertions, and promising succour and protection to all those who should declare themselves in favour of the ancient order of things, and of their hereditary and rightful monarch. What I am to ask, is, have we acted up to the spirit, or even the letter of our own proclamations? or to the spirit of that relation, in which the nature of the war itself, independent of any proclamations, placed us with respect to these people? I am compelled to say, (I say it with great reluctance, as well as with with great grief), I fear we have

* In the early stages of the war of La Vendée, before the republicans had had recourse to the system of laying waste and burning the country, and had brought the war to a footing, in which no quarter was given on either side, whatever prisoners were taken by the royalists, were released upon the condition of not serving again, either against them, or against the allied powers; the royalists having imagined, for some reason or another, that the allies and they were engaged in a common cause, and that the neglect which they might seem till then to have experienced, was owing wholly to the precautions taken by the enemy for preventing any communication with them. When, therefore, they heard, in the year 1793, that the garrisons of Mentz and Valenciennes were marching against them, knowing that these garrisons had surrendered upon terms, and that one of the terms was, that they should not serve again till exchanged, they concluded that this was a new instance of republican treachery, and that these troops, a numerous and most formidable body, the garrison of Mentz alone being reckoned at twelve thousand, could not be employed in this service, without some scandalous breach of engagement, such as would excite in the breasts of the allies no less resentment and indignation, than it did in those of the royalists. What then were their sensations, when they found, that this was no treachery on the part of the republicans, but that the allies themselves in framing their capitulations, and providing that these garrisons should not serve against the other parties in the war, had wholly forgotten, or neglected, to extend this provision to the case of the royalists; who with an army of immense force in point of numbers, perfect in the mode of its composition, animated by the most heroic courage, headed by officers of great ability and experience, but still weak to a great degree by the extreme deficiency, and often total want of all the ordinary means of war, were left to prosecute, as well as they could, the desperate and unequal contest in which they were engaged, disowned and abandoned by all the world. When they found this, their feelings were indeed acute, and their constancy almost shaken. They did not despair: it was not their nature to do so; but left thus to themselves, abandoned to their own resources, without aid, without co-operation, proclaimed, as it were, to all Europe, as not even belonging to that confederacy, of which they might have been excused in hoping that they should have been placed at the head; they felt that their prospects were truly gloomy, and such as might well have excused them for relinquishing from that instant every thought of farther resistance. That they did not so relinquish their hopes; that they long maintained the contest with unabated vigour; that the war broke out afterwards with fresh violence; that it never ceased to be renewed at every favourable opportunity, till the last of the continental powers had submitted and made its peace; that the elements of it remain entire to this day;—these are truths, which ought to be known and remembered for the credit of those concerned, though they yield but little consolation in the retrospect, and can now unhappily afford no ground of hope for the future.

Digitized by Google

done no such thing. I fear, that a stain is left upon our annals, far deeper than that, which, in former times, many were so laudably anxious to wash away, in respect to the conduct of this country towards the Catalans. The Catalans were not invited by any declarations more specific than those which we have made to the royalists: their claim upon us was in some respects more doubtful. Yet, so far were they from being passed over in silence in the terms of the peace; so far were they from being abandoned to their fate, left to the merciless persecution of their enemies, that a stipulation was made for a full and complete amnesty for them; and, far more than that, a provision, that they should be put upon the same footing, and enjoy the same privileges, with that province which was in fact the most favoured under the Spanish monarchy. Yet, because more was not done; because they were not placed in the situation of enjoying *all* that they asked; —much of it, perhaps, having more of an imaginary than a real value;—because in a part, where their claim was more disputable, perfect and entire satisfaction was not given them; did a large and respectable majority of this House think it necessary to institute a solemn inquiry,—the intended foundation of proceedings still more solemn,—in order to purge themselves and the country, as far as depended on them, from the shame of what they deemed a breach of the national faith.

By what purgations, by what ablutions, shall we cleanse ourselves from this far deeper and fouler blot, of having left to perish under the knives of their enemies, without even an effort to save them, every man of those whom we have *affected*, as it must now appear, to call our friends and allies; with whom we were bound, by interests of far higher import than those of a disputed succession; who were the assertors with us of the common morality of the world; who were the true depositaries of that sacred cause, the very priests of that holy faith; with whom we had joined, as it were, in a solemn sacrament; and who, on all these grounds, but chiefly for the sin of having held communion with us, are now, as might be expected, doomed by the fanatics of rebellion, to be the objects of never-ceasing hostility, to be pursued as offenders, whose crimes can only be expiated by their destruction?

I agree with what has been said by my right hon. friend the chancellor of the Exchequer, that peace once made, all communication with this, or any other class of people, hostile to the French government, must completely cease. Whatever the government is, or whatever its conduct may be, with respect to us, if we think fit to make peace with it, that peace must be religiously kept. I am not for curing one breach of faith by another. But was nothing to be done, in the final settlement of that peace; and still more during the time which has elapsed since the first commencement of the negotiations? I wish a satisfactory answer could be given to those inquiries. I wish it were true, that, for months past, numbers had not been perishing throughout the royalist provinces, the victims of their loyalty and honour;—(men hunted down, like wild beasts, for acts, which that government may call crimes, but which we, I hope, have not yet learned so to characterize;)—simply for want of such means as might have enabled them to effect their escape, and, after the loss of every thing but what their own minds must bestow, to have sought an asylum in some foreign land.

Sir, I would gladly draw a veil over these facts. But our shame is too flagrant and glaring to be concealed: the cry of this blood is too loud to be stifled. I beg to wash my hands of it. The share which I have happened to have in the affairs of this illustrious and unfortunate people; the interest which I have always taken in their cause, make me doubly anxious to vindicate myself from any participation in the guilt of having thus abandoned them. I wish I could vindicate, in like manner, the government and the country. Among all our shames, it is that of the most fatal nature, and of which possibly we shall longest rue the effects.*

* Those who may before have thought that such a vindication was necessary, will not be less of that opinion, when they shall be told, that within the last twelve months, more than three hundred royalist officers have been taken and put to death in the western provinces, and that of these all but forty or fifty have suffered since the date of the preliminary treaty. In the name of all that is sacred, what justification can a government or a country offer for such conduct? Three hundred men, or at least a great proportion of them, sacrificed to the vengeance of their enemies, simply because we neglected, or refused to listen to their solicitations to be

Digitized by Google

Sir, I have done. I have stated, as I thought it my duty to do, what my apprehensions are, as to the nature and consequences of the present peace. If the evils which I impute to it, are not to be found there, if the dangers which I apprehend should not come to pass, no one will more rejoice in my error than myself; those who differ from me will have nothing to complain of; I shall have alarmed myself: I shall not, probably, even have to reproach myself with having succeeded in alarming them. But if any there should be (there are none I am sure in this House), who should say, that my fears are not imaginary; that they think of this peace as I do; that they apprehend it will ruin the country; but that they hope the country may last long enough to serve their turn; that being traders, they think the trade of the country may be lost; that, being manufacturers, they believe its manufactures may decline; but that for this they care but little, provided the peace in the mean time shall prove advantageous to them;—to all such, if any there can be, there could be but one answer,—that they are a disgrace to their country and to their species; and that he must be as bad as they, who, upon such terms, could seek to merit their good opinion, or could solicit their favour. I trust, however, that no such men are to be found; but that all who rejoice in the present peace, do it under a persuasion, that the good which they may hope to derive from it, individually, is not to be obtained by the sacrifice of the final welfare and safety of their country.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, that entertaining a high value for the talents and integrity of the hon. gentleman, he could not help feeling considerable surprise at what had

---

allowed an asylum in this country, when in consequence of the peace which we were making, their service could be no longer useful in their own! Do we mean to say that these persons had no claim upon us to the extent of what they asked? Or that we could not afford the expense of receiving, and providing for so many additional emigrants? Monstrous as either of these allegations would be, they would still be better than what alone remains,—the direct and unqualified confession, that we did not dare to admit into this country men, to whom we were bound by every tie to furnish a place of refuge and safety, lest by so doing we should give offence to our enemies. In what a state must the probity of a great country be, when, in a case like the present, such a motive can be made a principle of action? to what must the mind of a country be reduced, when it can bear, that such a motive should become manifest to the world?

It may not be thought a trifling aggravation (if in such a mass of shame, aggravations were worth thinking of), that, just at this moment, a condemned, though pardoned traitor, Napper Tandy, is released from prison, and allowed to sail to France, yielded, we presume, as an act of grateful attention,—a kind of marriage present, to the first consul. Napper Tandy, be it remembered, was not a person to whom the faith of the French government was pledged by any public declaration, unless it shall be contended, as perhaps it ought, that their decree of the 19th of November 1792 still continues in force: he was not a person engaged in one of those civil wars, of which history may furnish examples, wherein the rights and pretensions of the parties were so equally balanced, as to make it doubtful, on which of the two sides the crime of commencing hostilities and breaking up the public peace ought in justice to be charged. He was a traitor in the common sense of the word, and upon the clearest evidence of the thing, and was condemned according to the established principles, on which the lives of such persons have become forfeit at all times, and in all countries. The first consul however, as is supposed, thought fit to ask his release: and the government here complied with his request. Such was the state of the intercourse between the two countries on the subject of persons of this description. But the royalists of France, persons who had been acting in conformity to, perhaps in consequence of our proclamations; whose objects we had declared to be substantially our own, of whose assistance we had a right to avail ourselves, according to every principle of the law of nations; who are not to be confounded, as is often wickedly or ignorantly done, with rebels and traitors, the subverters of their respective governments, but were on the contrary the upholders of the constitution of their country, in opposition to such rebels and traitors; to these royalists we refused an asylum, lest we should offend the irritable majesty of a usurper, and indispose him to grant such terms of peace, as those by which the safety of the country is now so happily secured. If these things do not disgrace and dishonour a country, I am at a loss to know what the disgrace and dishonour of a country is. We seek to conciliate the favour of an imperious and vindictive enemy, by the desertion of our friends, and the sacrifice of our national faith and honour. Our enemy, we may rest assured, will only despise us the more, without our deriving from that feeling any relaxation of the motives, which have long led him to resolve on our destruction.

Digitized by Google

fallen from him. The hon. gentleman had said, that in signing the preliminaries of peace, ministers had signed the death-warrant of their country; and, as if to give greater weight to the assertion, the hon. gentleman had pronounced a funeral oration over its departed manes. The hon. gentleman said, that the general joy which the news of the peace had diffused, arose from the event alone, and from the ignorance in which the people were as to the terms. He, for one, would say, that he confided in the wisdom, justice, and moderation of his majesty's ministers. He was satisfied that they would display a high sense of what was due to the dignity of the nation, but would also show themselves sensible of what was due to the happiness of the people. The only substantial argument in the hon. gentleman's speech, was an argument which went against making any peace at all; because no peace, except a peace accompanied with a counter-revolution, would satisfy him. The principles prevailing in France were certainly dangerous; but, were we to go on eternally with war till a total change of morals should take place? Nay, these principles would insinuate themselves equally in time of war, and we should have the two evils together. The hon. gentleman had said, that peace was not at our option, but that the enemy might renew the war at his pleasure. Certainly he might; but if the peace were to have only a duration of three months, still he thought it was proper to make peace, in order to give Europe a proof of our pacific disposition, and to establish a character and create friends that might be of service to us when we should be compelled to enter into a new contest. In concluding this peace, ministers had acted in conformity to the general feeling of the country. The hon. gentleman had said, that we were at the head of a powerful confederacy. So, indeed, we had been; but our confederates had fallen off, one after another, and many of them were now against us. Yet it was fair in ministers to make use of those confederates, while any assistance could be obtained from them. It was by confederacies that William 3rd, and the great duke of Marlborough had confined the ambition of monarchical France within its proper limits. He had found gentlemen purging and acquitting themselves of the charge of entering into a war against Jacobin principles. He would confess, that opposition to these principles was one motive with him for giving his support to the war; not with a view of interfering in the domestic concerns of France, but of securing this country against the activity with which this sect was endeavouring to propagate its principles. It was the general opinion, that the government then existing in France was adverse to the wishes of the people; it was therefore not impolitic to give the French people an opportunity of declaring their sentiments with effect, by employing the French armies on the frontier. But when all our efforts to make an impression on France proved ineffectual—when the consequences were ruinous to us, and afforded France new means of annoyance—when we were left alone in the contest, was it not wise to make peace? It was true we might wait the chances of the war; but these chances might be against us.—He now came to the terms; and here he should observe, that the hon. gentleman was guilty of a strange misapplication of words, in saying that this country had thrown itself at the mercy of France. Any future historian, who should have occasion to mention England, would speak of her in very different terms. The hon. gentleman's mind was overcharged with anxiety, and he could not make fair estimates. As to the restitution of our conquests, he commended it. We had as many settlements as we could want or manage. It had become a matter of jealousy against us, that we had engrossed the commerce of the world. He had no idea of growing rich by the exclusion of others: let all grow rich together. It was an erroneous opinion, that in order to derive commercial advantages from any country, it was necessary that that country should be under our dominion. America was a proof of the contrary. We had dissolved our engagements with our allies. Ministers had acted wisely, when they gave permission to Portugal to conclude a treaty with France. He would make no reflections on the present government of Portugal; but there had been a sovereign of that country, who had said that he would suffer his palace to be demolished about his ears, rather than renounce his connexion with England. Ministers, however, regarded the weakness of the country, and the House should do justice to their motives, when it heard the noble secretary, who was untainted with the corruption naturally attached to diplomacy, explain them with so much strength

Digitized by Google

and delicacy. There was one article of the preliminary treaty at which he felt some degree of uneasiness. He understood that Great Britain and France, besides engaging not to attack, or take possession of any of the Turkish territories, had also agreed to defend those territories against the attacks of other powers. He never could approve of such a contract, the extent of which could not be foreseen. It might involve us in a war with Russia, with Austria, or with other nations still more remote. He hoped, therefore, that in settling the definitive, treaty this article would be so framed, as to express the meaning it ought to bear. The article relative to Trinidad he could not suffer to pass without a remark. The efforts which he himself had made to bring about the abolition of the slave trade must be within the recollection of many who then heard him: and if he had not lately called the attention of the House to this subject, it was not from having abandoned it. In the island of Trinidad, there still remained a quantity of land to be settled upon and cleared, which it would require a million of slaves to do. By England getting possession of this island, she would become instrumental in promoting the slave trade to an extent far beyond what it was ever before. This was a cost of human misery, which no man could contemplate without anxiety. When he considered the state of this country with regard to France, he was sure we should be exposed to dangers, great beyond all comparison—dangers that depended on moral causes, and which were sure in their operation; but which, as he before observed, would not be lessened by continuing the war with France. The principles of France had taken root more deeply in the human mind than many gentlemen imagined. They had shaken those political and moral obligations, which were the greatest support of civil society. The luxury and relaxation of religious principles that prevailed in France, were great and alarming; and according to Machiavel, who was no bigot, the country where they prevailed was in the high road to ruin. When, therefore, he considered the intercourse that was about to take place between Englishmen and the inhabitants of a great, ingenious, and luxurious nation—when he considered the number of people who might crowd from this country to France, allured by her pleasures and her arts, he could not but think the danger great; and he sincerely wished this subject might be considered, and some provision made against the effects of that which could not be considered so much a political as a moral disease. It was a disease to which all political writers and philosophers attributed the ruin of nations; and it was the duty of the legislature to bear the subject in mind, and give effect to that practical line of conduct which this reasoning should point out to them. If this was done, nothing was to be feared from France. But if we should suffer the tree to be contaminated, the least puff of wind would blow it down, notwithstanding the beauty and extent of its branches. He had no objection to see France in a state of happiness and prosperity: it could not be incompatible with that of Great Britain. The enlarged views of commerce in modern times had done away that false system of policy, by which one commercial nation thought to become prosperous by the depression and poverty of another. He would conclude with an earnest hope that government would attend to all the means of promoting our prosperity and security, and of preventing our morals from being injured.

Dr. *Laurence* took a wide view of the important subject before the House, the result of which was a strong condemnation of the preliminaries. He began by expressing his marked disapprobation of the vague manner in which they were drawn up. As we never, by any treaty, made such sacrifices; so never, by any treaty, was there left such room for altercation. He once thought he might have done some service by pointing out these omissions and inaccuracies, but the errors of ministers were now irremediable. Marquis Cornwallis was sent to Amiens, bound hand and foot. The French had been told, that we were so eager for peace, or rather that peace was so necessary to us, that there were no sacrifices which we would not make to obtain it. The treaty of Utrecht had been quoted a little unfortunately, he thought, on this occasion, the ministers who concluded it having been impeached. He could, however, have been contented to see it brought to point a moral, or adorn a tale, had not all its principles, which had procured us near a century of prosperity, been now completely abolished. He expressed unbounded indignation at the language used by some gentlemen, ascribing to ministers moderation and magnanimity, inasmuch

Digitized by Google

as in the hour of success they had consented to terms, perhaps rather lower than they had a right to demand. Necessity was the only plea they could urge, and when they abandoned that, they laid themselves open to the most serious charge of misconduct. The learned doctor then went into a long history of the war, and explained the views of the different parties since its commencement. Afterwards he went on to draw a very alarming picture of the acquisitions of France, and of the deplorable situation in which we are left by the peace. The subjects of quarrel, he said, were immense, and we had no security but the chief consul might employ some one of them as soon as he had stripped us of our conquests. We could never begin a new war in such favourable circumstances as those in which we ended the present. He could hope little from our commerce. When a philosopher was shown, by an eastern monarch, his immense treasures, he replied, that the possessors of iron would soon get possession of it. The embassy of the marquis Cornwallis might illustrate this still better. He and his suite appeared in the utmost magnificence of dress and equipage, while they were received on the road by not the most superbly clothed, but the most military-looking corps in France. It was a well-known fact, that those troops who escorted him from stage to stage were all picked grenadiers. In as far as concerned our allies, the treaty was disgraceful in the extreme. After going over our different allies, he lamented, in a manner peculiarly bitter, the hard fate of the prince of Orange. Who would have expected, he asked, that, almost on the anniversary of the landing of king William to free us from slavery, his representative should be betrayed by us, and ruined, for no other reason than because he had adhered to our cause with unshaken constancy? For a lesson of fidelity to their allies, he desired ministers to look to the French. Never once had they been driven from any city or country without expressly stipulating for the protection and safety of those who had befriended them. Cooped up in Alexandria, Menou had refused to capitulate unless the English undertook for the security, in their persons and property, of Copbts and Egyptians, Mahometans and Christians, Jacobites and Jacobins. By Jacobites, he said, he meant a religious sect known by that name. Henceforth it would come to pass, that when the smaller states were obliged to choose a powerful ally, they would look to France; there they might expect protection; but from us only ingratitude and dereliction. He concluded by saying, that he was far from wishing to carry on war for ever, but he did wish to see it carried on till we could have peace. That state did not deserve the name which required us to remain in arms, and to submit to an abridgement of our liberties.—Dr. L. condemned, in very severe terms, the declaration of Mr. Wilberforce, who had expressed his approbation of the peace, even though it should last but three months.

Mr. *Elliot* said, that his mind was filled with the most gloomy and desponding apprehensions. He looked upon the peace as absolute and unqualified ruin. All the objects for which the war had been undertaken were at once given up, and we were now surrounded by accumulated danger. The treaty abrogated the public law of Europe, and went to abolish the title of sovereigns to their crowns. We allowed ourselves to be second to France, a situation in which we could not long exist, to such a degree were we envied by the rest of Europe. He saw no improvement in the dispositions of the chief consul. Did he now show less audacity of enterprise, or malignity of intrigue? Was his amendment to be discerned in the late transactions in Holland or Switzerland, or in the tragi-comedy acted at Florence? He continued to dictate new constitutions to his vassal republics; and, to bring monarchy into contempt, set up a prince of the house of Bourbon, after cruelly and wantonly dethroning the hereditary prince. The hon. gentleman sat down with observing, that he considered the treaty as a wasteful and unnecessary sacrifice of our honour and our interests, to procure a delusive and short-lived tranquillity.

The *Secretary at War* (Mr. Yorke) said, that the first thing he should take notice of was, the danger to which this country was said to be exposed by the peace now before the House. That danger arose from the geographical situation of France, and its relative condition with respect to this country. The geographical situation of France was certainly matter of just apprehension to this country; but the question to be considered, as arising out of that apprehension, was, whether there was any reasonable hope, by a continua-

Digitized by Google

tion of the war, of reducing the power of France? If there was any hope of our being able to do so by another campaign, or by a number of campaigns, or that by them we could obtain security against the power of France, he should have thought it prudent to try the effect of such campaigns; but however well we might be convinced of the danger to us from the situation of France, if it was not in the power of this country to affect that power in any material degree by a continuation of the war, then the continuation would be useless. As long as we were able to have the alliance of the great powers of the continent to act cordially for the purpose of reducing the power of France, he had always been of opinion, it was for the interest of this country to act in co-operation with that confederacy, to make a common cause against the power of France. That confederacy, however, could not now be formed. It was impossible for any one to regret it more than he did; but what could we do if the coalition could not be formed? The last campaign had been as brilliant on our part as any that had ever taken place (the particulars of which he recited), but still he did not see what we were to gain by continuing the war. Indeed, he could not see that we could do better than to adopt the course held out yesterday by his noble friend (lord Hawkesbury), who had forcibly and happily conveyed his meaning by saying, we should adopt a system of mixed conciliation and firmness; a policy without which he apprehended this country could not long preserve its present prosperity.

Mr. *Hobhouse* said, he would not reply to those who were advocates for the continuance of the war, because they saw France in a condition so formidable, that no state would be able to withstand her power upon the continent. Other gentlemen had given a sufficient answer to that argument. He would only declare, that he lamented, as much as any man, the extent of the coast which she had acquired, and the preponderating influence which she exercised over surrounding nations. He wished to have seen her reduced within her ancient limits; but would it not be prudent first to inquire into the adequacy of our means to the accomplishment of so desirable an end? Mighty confederacies had been formed, and mighty exertions had been made, which had unfortunately not tended to the diminution of her greatness, but to the increase of her dominion. The nations of Europe could not be roused to enter upon a new coalition; and if they could, it would be attended with the same ill-success as their former ineffectual attempts. Where, then, was the hope of making any impression upon France on the continent of Europe?—Neither would he enter the lists with those gentlemen who disliked the peace from an apprehension of French principles, for they had already been defeated by the many able speeches which he had heard. Was it not an obvious truth, that opinions were not to be conquered by force of arms? Opinions, if, in their consequences, they were found to be mischievous, would always be abandoned, as soon as their pernicious tendency was experienced; and this was the case at present with those Jacobinical doctrines which had so long and so ruinously obtained in France, and which were now not less detested by the French, than the English nation. This happy change of sentiment in the inhabitants of France was not the result of force, nor ascribable to the British arms, but to the conviction that those baneful tenets had given birth to all the miseries of anarchy, and all the sanguinary excesses which they had witnessed.—Without farther delay, he would advert to the only two new points brought forward during the course of this night's debate. In the first place, it had said by a learned gentleman, that the preliminaries were loosely worded, and marked by a vagueness never before discernible in a treaty of this kind; but the learned doctor had advanced no proof in support of his assertion. Another hon. gentleman had, indeed, endeavoured to fix the same imputation upon the fifth article, which guaranteed the integrity of the Turkish empire. Now, said the hon. gentleman, as this article declares, that "the territories and possessions of the Sublime Porte shall be preserved entire, such as they existed previously to the present war," this country would be called upon, if Passwan Oglou were to succeed in detaching any part of the Turkish dominions from the Sultaun, to effect a re-conquest, and restore their integrity. But was the hon. gentleman not aware, that a contract was only binding upon the contracting parties; and that this article, therefore, could only mean, if interpreted by the plain rule of common sense, that France and England solemnly engaged not to infringe upon the Ottoman empire, as it

Digitized by Google

existed previously to the war? We were not bound to interfere on account of any aggression by other powers, or of any internal commotions in the state. If France attempted the dismemberment of Turkey, it was a breach of faith, it was a violation of treaty, and afforded a good ground for a declaration of war on the part of England. Was not the same degree of reliance to be placed upon the honour of the French, as of every other government? The learned doctor said, No; and averred, that French perfidy was seen in the chief consul having, since the signature of the preliminaries with England, ratified a treaty with Portugal, which, according to the assurance of the noble secretary of state, he had agreed to cancel. But to him the explanation of the noble secretary was perfectly satisfactory, and thoroughly vindicated Buonaparté against the charge of infidelity to his engagements. The learned doctor would do well to wait until an official copy of the treaty in question could be produced, instead of indulging himself in rash and ill-grounded invective. —Another objection made to the preliminaries by the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Windham) and the learned doctor was, that no provision was introduced for the security of the royalists, who had joined our standard, and co-operated with us to effect the restoration of monarchical government. General Menou, it was said, had bargained, in the capitulation of Alexandria, for the security of all persons who had taken up arms against their own government, and had aided his attempt to separate Egypt from the Turkish empire; but would gentlemen therefore say, that England, in offering a projet of peace to France, should have insisted upon a positive stipulation, that safe return and adequate provision should be granted to all those who had used every endeavour to overturn the existing government in that country? There existed no analogy between the two cases. Was any such article inserted in the projet at Lisle? Certainly not. Was any such provision to be found in the treaty with our American colonies? Certainly not. For his part, he greatly doubted whether France would have consented to treat at all, if the preliminaries had contained a condition on the part of his majesty in behalf of those whom the French government, whose legitimacy we had now acknowledged, regarded in no other light than rebels. His majesty's ministers had doubtless, in the most strenuous manner, recommended those unfortunate royalists to the protection and humanity of the first consul. What more could they have done? It was all which, consistently with propriety, could have been brought forward, and all which they promised in the proclamation quoted by the learned doctor. This proclamation from the king, in the early part of the war, invited such as were discontented with the existing order of things in France, to join the British standard, and held out to them an assurance of protection, but what degree of protection did it pledge? It stated that every support should be given to them "which the nature of the case would admit." How then had his majesty's government broken faith with the French royalists? He was ready to believe, without calling upon them for any declaration whatever, that they had urged their pitiable condition with the greatest force; and that they would still continue to show the greatest possible attention to their interests.—Of the peace itself, he was free to avow, that it commanded his full and unqualified approbation. He would state the principle upon which he gave his vote in favour of the preliminaries? It was, that such a peace was far preferable to the continuance of the war, and that the chance of obtaining an island or two was not worth the blood and treasure which would necessarily be expended in another campaign. He was a stranger to those gloomy apprehensions, as to the insecurity of this peace, which were entertained by some. The energies of the British nation had been frequently exhibited during the war; and he was at a loss to discover why our dominions, being increased so considerably, we should be less equal to the defence of our territories in another than in the past contest. Instead of suffering a low and depressed state of spirits, his mind exulted with joy. He gave credit to ministers for having concluded the best peace, which the circumstances of the country would allow. He was convinced that they had acted from the purest motives. Than the right hon. gentleman at the head of his majesty's councils, whom he was proud to call his tried and faithful friend, from earliest youth (the chancellor of the exchequer), a man of more private integrity and public virtue did not exist. With the greatest pleasure he gave his assent to the preliminaries; and

Digitized by Google

if the future conduct of ministers were conformable to the specimen they had now given—if the pacific system should appear to prevail in all their councils—and if they did not continue the existing encroachments upon the constitution beyond the date of their expiration, they should have his unbounded confidence, and cordial support.

Mr. *Baker* said, that if the terms of the peace were not so good as he could have wished, he was convinced that it was not the fault of ministers, who, he was sure, had done every thing in their power to obtain the best possible terms for the country. The great question for the House to decide was, whether the terms of the peace were adequate to our situation, considering it with relation to the situation of France? and upon the best consideration he was able to give the subject, he was inclined to think they were. It had been said that we had now to contend against the power, and not against the principles of France. To this proposition he could not accede; because, in fact, we were contending against power founded upon those very principles. He had been very much struck with an observation which had been made by an hon. gentleman, that France, in the whole of this transaction, had shown nothing like any principles of conciliation. She retained every one of those possessions which she had acquired, by the exercise of those principles against which it was now supposed we had no longer to contend. It was unnecessary for him, in supporting this argument, to go over all the arguments that could be adduced upon the subject. He need not state the cases of Holland, Flanders, &c. Her conduct with regard to Flanders showed that she set all treaties at defiance when they interfered with her projects; and she now retained Flanders, which she had so acquired, to the great danger of this country. There was another part of the conduct of France which was revolted at in the negotiations of Paris and Lisle, but which seemed to have been admitted in this, viz. that whatever they acquired in the war, and incorporated with their dominions, became so absolutely annexed to their dominions, that they would not suffer them to become the subject of negotiation. The case of Belgium and of Savoy proved this assertion. This consideration seemed to have been overlooked in the present treaty. Besides, France had never, either in form or in substance, repealed the famous decree of the 19th November, 1792; nay, she had not only given it up, but she had invariably acted upon it. Another subject which he thought well worth attention was, the situation of St. Domiago. It was the intention, he understood, of France, to send out a very large force to that island, and they were not to be sent out in the ordinary way, in transports, but in ships of the line. The consequence of this would be, that France would have a very large force in the West Indies, and we must either keep an equal force or our possessions there would be at the mercy of France in case of a rupture with her. It would therefore, in his opinion, be necessary for us to keep up a large force. He then alluded to some articles which had appeared in the public papers, which were represented as secret articles of this treaty; they stated, that we were to guarantee the king of Etruria, &c. He merely referred to them as having seen them in the newspapers, without knowing whether they were authentic or not. Upon the whole, however, he decidedly approved of the peace; but at the same time he thought we ought to adopt every precautionary measure that we could, without exciting the suspicions of France.

Mr. *Dawson* rose to pay his tribute to those ministers who had concluded a peace which appeared to him to meet universal approbation. He was in Ireland when the news of the peace arrived, and he did not meet a man who was well affected to the constitution, who did not rejoice at it. With regard to the terms, he had such an opinion of the present administration, that he was convinced they were as good as could be obtained.

Mr. *W. Wynn* said, that after so many gentleman had so fully and so ably spoken upon this subject, he certainly was unable to add any thing new upon it, but he could not give a silent vote. He could not look upon the peace with the same sentiments of satisfaction as many gentlemen had done, because he thought it was big with danger to the country.

Colonel *Wood* said, that, to form a correct judgment on the subject, we must consider not merely the relative situations of France and England, but of those countries in respect to other powers of Europe. France he considered as invulnerable to any attack from England, for the purpose of abridging her continen-

Digitized by Google

tal power; but he believed few gentlemen considered every part of the united kingdom, as well as of our extensive colonies, as equally secure from France. Undoubtedly, by blockading her ports, and destroying her trade, France might have been induced, within some indefinite time, to accede to better terms than the present, but the dangers and evils likely to arise from lengthening the contest, no terms could, in his mind, compensate for. The addition of forty millions a year to national debt, exclusive of keeping many hundred thousands of our most valuable subjects idle, who could be employed in agriculture, manufactures, and the improvement of the country; considering the present state of our finances, as well as the burthens of the people, were weighty reasons with ministers for concluding the present peace. But there were many other cogent reasons, in the present state of Europe, which justified them in putting an end to so ruinous a contest. Gentlemen cannot have so soon forgotten the confederacy of the northern powers to destroy the most important interests of this country; and, although the contest is for the present at an end, may we not reasonably conjecture that Denmark and Sweden are not still so well disposed towards us, as their own real interests ought to have led them to be? Russia, indeed, was now governed by a wise and just prince; yet, who would stake the security of their country upon the life of an individual? What reliance could be had upon the crooked policy of Prussia? and Austria, had she even the ability, has she still the inclination to renew the contest? Could we expect from Turkey any important assistance, at a time when she can scarcely prevent her own tottering empire from falling to pieces? Under these untoward circumstances, was England to wage war against France, for the object of reducing her continental power, at the time that these powers upon the continent most interested had themselves confirmed it? Such conduct would have been more wild than the adventures of Don Quixote. No person more regretted than he did the overgrown power of France; but no one could foresee but that very power, which was at present so formidable, might contain in it the seeds of its own dissolution. In regard to the conquests which were to be restored, excepting Malta, none appeared to him to be very material to the interests of this country. That island, from its situation, fortifications, and harbour, was invaluable to this country; and so long as we held possession of it, France could never look towards Egypt and Syria as the road to molest us in India. The Levant trade, although at present inconsiderable, was, he believed, chiefly to be attributed to the most unwise monopoly granted to the Turkey company, who do not themselves use it, yet by their charter precluded others from benefiting. As to the West India islands, we had still as many of them as could be for the interest of the country; and, unless those we had could be retained at a less expense of blood and treasure, we had better be without them. The Cape of Good Hope, undoubtedly, should France re-establish her marine, might be of consequence; but under the present circumstances he had doubts. Ceylon was of infinite importance, on account of its harbour; as was the Island of Trinidad, in the West Indies, for the same reason. Under all circumstances, he felt infinite obligations to ministers for putting an end to the war; and particularly to his right hon. friend the present minister, who, in an hour of difficulty and danger, charged himself with the helm of the state, and had for the present brought her safely into port.

Mr. *Ellison* repelled the idea, that the country was in a state of humiliation; on the contrary, he thought her recent conduct peculiarly glorious to her. She was true to her allies, and adequately asserted her own honour and interests. He thanked ministers for what they had done. The peace, he trusted, would unite every heart and hand in the country in support of its government.

Mr. *Nicholls* was confident that the peace would prove safe with respect to this country in every point of view. He expressed his conviction of the sincerity of the French government. Much seemed to be apprehended from France becoming a commercial nation; that her character in that respect would alter, he wished. He would rather see her attention turned to her commerce and colonies, than her power employed in hostile or destructive projects. In this view he wished she might regain the entire possession of St. Domingo, and he wished it with a view to the safety of our own West India Islands, and of Jamaica in particular; for in the present situation of St. Domingo, that

Digitized by Google

invaluable island could not be safe. He also regarded the peace with satisfaction as the basis of reciprocal commercial benefits, and of the renewal of the commercial treaty with France. He firmly believed that the present treaty was made in the true spirit of reconciliation, and he gave ministers full credit for their conduct in procuring it for the country. At the same time, he was induced to commend the moderation displayed by Buonaparté, particularly with respect to Austria, which, he thought, was highly honourable to him. If riches were the object of the French, they, who were an enlightened and wise people, well knew that they were not to be acquired by the means of plunder and pillage. Such a line of conduct never made a nation rich, or Algiers would be one of the richest countries in the world. No, the French were well aware, that it was alone by habits of peace and industry that riches were to be acquired, and by commercial pursuits, which it was obvious could alone be successfully cultivated in the interval of peace.

Mr. *Babington* spoke in favour of the peace, and adverted to the article between France and England, respecting the guarantee of integrity to the Turkish territories, which principle he treated as highly impolitic and dangerous. He entertained a jealousy with respect to guarantees in general, though he was aware that circumstances might arise which might render such measures expedient. He considered Russia and Austria as the natural allies of this country, and as forming the most efficacious reciprocal checks upon France.

Mr. *R. Thornton* approved of the peace, for which he thought ministers deserved the thanks and gratitude of the country: it was the more acceptable, because unexpected by the great body of the people; and he had reason to think ministers had obtained the most favourable terms that could be had. France might be increased in bulk; but she was not proportionally so in real strength and muscle. Peace was desirable at almost any rate.

Mr. *G. Ogle* observed, that there was not a loyal man in Ireland who did not receive the tidings of the peace with joy and satisfaction; and, on the contrary, there was not a rebel, or a disaffected individual, who did not receive it with disapprobation and regret.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that by what had fallen from the hon. gentleman who spoke last, he understood, that those hon. gentlemen who so highly disapproved of the peace, were countenanced in that disapprobation by the feelings and opinions of the disaffected; and that so far as their feelings were hurt at the peace, those feelings (unexpectedly no doubt by them) were in unison with those of the United Irish. His right hon. friend who had led the debate that evening, seemed to think that peace could not be sincerely made on both sides, or firmly established with France, until, not only the government and political principles of France were changed, but even the morals and manners of her people were radically reformed. With respect to these measures, he should observe, that an answer to them all was comprised in a question asked by that hon. gentleman himself:—"Are we never to be at Peace?" He would answer—"Yes;" and at the same time would say, that he hoped and trusted, that, upon the principles cited from his right hon. friend, the government or the parliament of Great Britain would never be influenced to act. He had the highest respect for the character of his right hon. friend. He well knew the uprightness and firmness of his principles, and the ardour and sincerity of his patriotism. His regret at differing from him in points of such incalculable importance was, therefore, the more considerable. His right hon. friend had seemed to start at the bare idea of an end to our resources: With respect to these, he certainly could not say they were inexhaustible; yet, God be thanked, the national resources were far from being in that situation which some gentlemen seemed to consider them; and he would observe in the contemplation of their being farther removed from such a state, that he rejoiced that the sovereign had yielded to the advice of his confidential servants, in consenting to the preliminaries of peace. With respect to what had been said, in a comparative view, in regard to the negotiations at Lisle, he contended, that, in the way of argument, those who defended the preliminaries had a right to put the case as they had done; and that the House, which approved of the negotiation at Lisle, could not, in consistency or justice, refuse their approbation in this instance. It had been said, that the continental power of France was not abridged, and that Britain was confessedly unable to

Digitized by Google

contest that power. It was never meant to say, that the power of Great Britain was not such, that, if properly used, it might, with every desirable effect be placed in the scale opposite to that of France; in this idea, he did not mean hostilely opposed, but in the way of comparison of their political power and influence. He must revolt at the idea, that, because France had made considerable acquisitions, England could not raise its head—far from it; and in proof of this he had only to desire those who doubted, to look at the state of our army and navy, and consider their achievements—to contemplate our national commerce, resources, and wealth—and, above all, our inestimable constitution. He should not omit, in a statement of this kind, the extent of our dominions and possessions, as well at home as broad: added to this, let the national character of both countries be thrown into the scale of consideration, and then compare the whole with all that France possessed, and he had no hesitation in putting the question, let any wise and candid man lay his hand upon his heart and say, on which side lay the advantage?

The Address was then agreed to, and ordered to be presented to his majesty by the whole House.

The King's Answer to the Commons Address.] To the Address of the Commons his Majesty returned this Answer:

"Gentlemen; I return you my thanks for this loyal and dutiful Address. The sentiments which you have expressed upon this important occasion are highly satisfactory to me, and calculated to produce the happiest effects."

Debate in the Lords on the Preliminaries of Peace with France.] Nov. 3. The order of the day being read, the Preliminary Articles of Peace were read at length by the clerk. After which,

The Earl of *Romney* rose and said: My lords; we have terminated a war, the most momentous in which Britain has ever been engaged; a war productive of the heaviest burthens, though patriotically and loyally borne. It was a war of necessity, for the defence of our allies and for the preservation of our religion, law and social order; and as it was on our part necessary, so, where we only were concerned, has it been accompanied by the most signal successes. Glorious as that war was in which the immortal Chatham presided at the helm of affairs, the present is equally splendid; our fleets have been victorious to a greater extent than even in the Seven Years war: they have crushed the navy, and annihilated the commerce of our enemy: the whole of maritime Europe, jealous of our naval power, combined to attempt its humiliation; they found all vain endeavours recoil on themselves. Egypt has witnessed the glorious exertions of the British troops. In that country we had to contend with an army much more numerous than our own, inured to the climate, and commanded by an able and skilful general. They were the chosen troops of France, who had fought under the conqueror of Italy in all his triumphant campaigns: and with reason had styled themselves the Invincible Legion; for invincible they were till they encountered British soldiers. In every other enterprize where Britons only were concerned, we succeeded. Success is the season for concluding peace. It is not wise nor politic to be, even in victory, pertinacious beyond the object of the contest, or to insist on terms more advantageous than those for which we originally fought. We have secured our religion, our laws, our constitution, our property, and our independence. The treaty before the House secured all the important objects for which the war had been carried on. The settlements of Ceylon and Trinidad, which we have retained, are of considerable importance. In India we have gained signal victories. We have conquered Mysore, and entirely destroyed the principal friend of France, who, with his father Hyder Ally, has been always forming projects hostile to England. We have also procured restitution to the allies who continued to adhere to us. We had driven from the Turkish dominions an enemy who had seized the most valuable part of the Sultan's territories, and the granary of his metropolis. To our allies, during the war, we behaved with magnanimous liberality. When fidelity to us was no longer beneficial to themselves, we released them from their engagements. France had, no doubt, obtained additions to her territories, far surpassing any conquests that Louis 14th had conceived possible. But the conquests of France were not the fault of Britain. We could not prevent its gigantic effort on the continent. Were we to persevere in a hopeless contest?

Digitized by Google

Were we, for an island more or less, not necessary to our security, to go on accumulating debt? It has been objected, that the peace cannot be lasting; but one great security for its permanence is the interest both of Britain and France. It appears to me, that the treaty insures to Britain security; and, as far as the uncertainty of all human actions admits, promises to be permanent. The noble lord concluded with moving the following Address:

"Most gracious sovereign; we, your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords spiritual and temporal, in parliament assembled, beg leave to return your majesty our most sincere thanks for your gracious condescension in directing the preliminary articles of peace, which have been ratified by your majesty and the French Republic, to be laid before this House.—We can assure your majesty, that we have bestowed on them that serious consideration which the important objects they embrace so justly demand; and we beg leave to express to your majesty, with the most heart-felt gratitude, the satisfaction we derive from this important arrangement, which, while it manifests your majesty's justice and moderation, and the regard and attention to good faith which have governed your majesty's conduct towards your allies, will, we are persuaded, be productive of important national advantages, and promote the substantial interests of this country."

Viscount *Limerick* supported the Address. He thought it augured strongly in favour of the treaty, that all ranks and descriptions of men in the country approved of it. In his estimation, the preliminaries were most opportunely concluded; their tenor was advantageous, and the whole proceeding highly honourable to the national character. Let the present situation of the country be compared with that in which she stood at the last peace, and the comparison would be decidedly in favour of her present circumstances. On the former occasion, our finest colonies were rent from the parent state. Island after island, and fortress after fortress, were shamefully ceded to the enemy. The ministry of that day were prevented from perfecting what they had well begun, by being driven from their seats by an unexpected and unnatural coalition. He hoped nothing of that sort would take place in the present day. On no former occasion had the skill and bravery of our navy and army shone forth with greater brilliancy. He would instance the cases of Egypt and Aboukir. He hoped that a stronger peace establishment would be kept up. The war he had always held to be necessary, and of course just; and the late ministers deserved the gratitude of the country for their conduct with respect to it. The present ministers likewise deserved the greatest applause. They were vested with the reins of government at a period of great difficulty, and their conduct had evinced their patriotism and ability.

Earl *Spencer* lamented the necessity he felt himself under from his sense of duty, to deliver an opinion opposite to that of the two noble lords who had last spoke. If he did not feel himself called upon by his sense of duty, he should much rather have deplored in silence the calamity of the present peace, and the enthusiastic joy with which the people had received it. He should rather have suppressed the mortification he felt at the degradation of his country: he felt peculiar pain at opposing the measures of men with whom he had so long acted, and with whom he was connected by the ties of friendship; but his opinion on this subject was diametrically opposite to their's. He thought that no single object of the war had been obtained, and that we had sacrificed all means of protection. We had in every part of the world made cessions of countries which the valour of our forces by land and sea had conquered, and which would have secured us from the effects of the aggrandizement of France upon the continent. It had been said that we had protected our allies. What was the fact? How had we protected Portugal? It appeared that it was only a portion of her territory whose integrity was to be preserved. A part of the important province of Olivenza was to be ceded: our ally the prince of Orange was not even named in the preliminaries, although from his faithful attachment to us he had lost both his territories and his station. Could it be said that Ceylon and Trinidad gave either sufficient indemnity for the past, or security for the future? In India the bravery of our army had subdued Tippoo Saib, and placed that country out of danger; but by this peace, which surrenders to the enemy the Cape of Good Hope and Cochin, we afford them an entrance into Malabar; while in South America we

Digitized by Google

have permitted Portugal to cede to France a strong military position at the mouth of the river of Amazons. In the West Indies we had surrendered Martinico, and left the French in possession of St. Domingo. In the Mediterranean we had surrendered every thing, and excluded ourselves. In Malta the French were to have equal footing with ourselves. In short, he saw nothing but a precarious peace. It was said it was the interest of France to maintain this peace, but who had learned to calculate the interest of an usurper? If ever peace was precarious, this was that peace. If ever precarious peace was dangerous, this was that peace. The French principles are triumphant, and adorned with all the attraction and dignity of success. He felt sorry to differ from ministers, and considered it now most peculiarly his duty to support such measures of vigour as might give the country a chance of safety.

The Duke of *Clarence* supported the peace. He considered that we had as much security as could be expected in these revolutionary times, from a government of the nature of the French Republic. His royal highness took an able review of the events of the last war: after bestowing the warmest encomiums on our fleets, he paid the highest tribute of applause to the gallantry of the British soldiers during the course of the war. In this respect he traced the glory of the British arms, not only in gallant exploits achieved upon the continent of Europe, but in the conquest of the enemy's colonies, and in the overthrow and destruction of Tippoo Saib. While the British arms were attended with such glory and success, a gigantic enterprise of the present first consul of France threatened for a time to interrupt their progress. 40,000 of the best troops of the French Republic embarked on the expedition to Egypt. This plan not only menaced all our possessions in the East, but threatened the existence of the Turkish government.—The first important check which this formidable army of French invaders met, was from a handful of British troops under sir Sidney Smith, long before the landing of that army which became in their turn the conquerors of Egypt. It was on the memorable 21st of March last, when a British army, engaged with a French army, proved itself superior both in courage and capacity. The French, although superior in numbers, were very inferior in military address. After passing very high encomiums on the conduct of our army, his royal highness passed to the brilliant achievements of our navy. The memorable 1st of June, 14th of February, 11th of October, and 1st of August, would be for ever brilliant and glorious in our naval history. The time was however come for making peace. Each of the powers, from their vast conquests, was placed in that predicament, that no blow could be given with effect on either side. France had completely overcome every contending power on the continent. Great Britain, as far as regarded maritime affairs, was in the same state. This was therefore (as expressed by a distinguished personage) no common peace; but a reconciliation of differences between the two greatest powers in the world! He considered the possessions that we retained as very judiciously selected, not only from their productions and real value, but on account of their situations and the advantages we might derive from their harbours. It was the obvious policy of Great Britain to pay her principal attention to commercial stations; while an immense power like France naturally looked to continental acquisitions. His royal highness concluded by giving his hearty assent to the motion.

Lord *Pelham*, in vindication of the treaty, compared it with the *projet* which the former ministers had given in in 1797. The only difference was, that the Cape of Good Hope, which by that *projet* was to have been retained, is now to be made a free port. This difference surely would not authorize a continuation of the war. As to no mention having been made of the prince of Orange, it was most evident that we had not the power to reinstate him by force of arms; but certainly no opportunity would be lost in negotiating for his interests. Naples, which now was possessed by the armies of France, was to be restored to its lawful sovereign. Malta was to be availing to neither of the contracting parties. As for Portugal, she had retained every thing that could be useful to retain, and had made no sacrifice that could be injurious. There was nothing in the West Indies which could have justified a continuance of the struggle, and in the East the overthrow of Tippoo had completely secured our empire from annoyance. Ceylon and Trinidad were important acquisitions;

Digitized by Google

but it was much more important that we had overcome the erroneous opinions prevalent in England and in Ireland. He concluded with trusting the peace would be found advantageous and safe for the country.

Lord *Westmeath* was fully persuaded that we had obtained the securities of peace. We had consequently established, on the firmest basis, the prosperity and happiness of Great Britain. By the blessings of peace we might restore trade, improve agriculture, and strengthen our constitution. We had also an opportunity of checking the restless ambition of a few factious men, who take a pleasure in disturbing the peace and happiness of mankind. The time of trouble was past, and things would be restored to their former prosperity and vigour. Our system of government, instead of being the sport of mad theorists, who wished to overturn the glorious fabric of our ancestors, would, as hitherto, become the admiration of the world. By the peace which the ministers had attained, we might re-return to objects of industry and the blessings of peace. Ireland, instead of being a millstone about the neck of Great Britain, would prove an inestimable jewel.

Lord *Grenville* said, it would have been matter of the most heart-felt satisfaction to him, if he could have agreed to an address, stating that we had brought an arduous and important contest to a successful termination. If the fact was so, it would be matter of consolation to him for the remainder of his life. But much, he feared, that instead of this being the case, he should have to lament that those years which he had spent in endeavouring to attain it, would prove to have been spent in fruitless labour; for, according to the best consideration he had been able to give the subject, no one of the objects for which we had warred so long had been attained. The noble mover had justly stated, that security had been the object of the war. It was so; but instead of obtaining that object, we were in a situation of greater insecurity than we were at the commencement of the war, or at any time during its continuance. In examining the question before them, he thought it material to state what was precisely and distinctly the nature of the proposed motion. He conceived the question was not whether peace was desirable upon secure and honourable terms, for peace upon such terms was the object of every war; nor whether it should, or should not now be agreed to; for the honour of the nation was pledged to perform the conditions; but it was this: What are the merits of the present treaty? And shall the House carry to the foot of the throne an address which tells his majesty that they have fully considered those merits, and that the terms are such as deserve their approbation? To this he could not agree, because he thought the terms fraught with degradation and national humiliation. The question being thus narrowed, the next consideration was, how was it to be tried? It had been stated, that it was a question of terms, and that therefore the test must be by an examination of those terms; by weighing our cessions and our conquests; and by balancing our losses, our acquisitions, and our relative situation. In entering into negotiation, every statesman knew that the basis must be one of these two—either to take *status quo ante bellum*, or the *uti possidetis*, at the moment of negociating. From one of these points every negotiation must set out. True it was, that if the state of things were such, that they could not be replaced in their original position; or that the superiority of one side was such as to render ridiculous such a project, at least every deviation in the other case ought to be narrowly watched and maturely considered. If we were inferior to our enemy, that most unquestionably must be taken into consideration. But that was not our situation: at no period of the last year were we inferior to the enemy in the means necessary to continue the contest with vigour and effect. If the situation of the country was elevated and prosperous, we ought to have had honourable terms of peace, because we were in a condition to demand them. This being the situation of our own country, what was the situation of France, and by comparing the two countries, what were their relative conditions? It was far from his intention to under-value the acquisitions of France; on the contrary he thought them more important than they were generally esteemed. She had made the Rhine the boundary of her empire; she had acquired Savoy, &c. and had not only extended her territory beyond what the most ambitious of her monarchs ever had in contemplation, but she had her frontiers protected by dependent republics and tributary kings.

Digitized by Google

On our side, we had successes no less brilliant and striking; we had multiplied our colonies, and our navy rode invincible. We had rescued Egypt; we had captured Malta; we had possessed ourselves of Minorca; and the Mediterranean was shut up from the ships of France and Spain. In the East Indies we had every thing except Batavia, and that we should have possessed, but it was not worth the cost of an expedition. We had the Cape of Good Hope, if not the only, at least an important key to the East. In the West Indies we had every thing desirable, Martinico, Trinidad, &c. &c. Upon the continent of South America we had an absolute empire, in extent almost equal, and superior to that power to whom we had restored it. He meant Surinam, Demerara, &c. Indeed, the value of it was not known until in British hands, it had felt the benefit of British industry and British capital. Such were the colonial possessions which we had acquired by the war. It was true that the war was not undertaken for the purpose of colonial conquests; yet the force of the country had been most wisely directed to that object; for whenever we were at war with France, one of our first objects must always be to cripple her marine, which could never be better done than by contracting her commerce—by depriving her of her colonial possessions. But although we were disappointed in the object of the war, these possessions should nevertheless have been held as pledges of indemnity, and still more as pledges for security; and if the continent of Europe could not have been restored to its former state, they ought to have been retained as a counterpoise to the power of France.—The noble secretary seemed to rest a great part of his defence of the treaty by a sort of *argumentum ad hominem*, by a comparison of the treaty with the *projet* of Lisle. He disdained to retract what he then did, but he thought the question ought to be decided by arguments of higher importance, and drawn from the nature of things themselves. But it had escaped the noble lord's memory that in addition to what they proposed to cede by the *projet* of Lisle, the present treaty gave up Surinam, Malta, and Minorca. Upon what new principle in negotiation was it, that, after four years of additional war and expense, they should offer more to receive less, which was the case, as between the present treaty and the projet of Lisle? The noble lord said, that they treated on a footing of equality. At Lisle the case was different; for at no time during the continuance of the war was the spirit of the country so much depressed as just as that period. If he were asked, why did ministers choose such a moment of despondency to negociate? He would fairly say, that it was a moment preferred by no man; but they were fully convinced, though it was then a melancholy reflection, that the war could no longer be carried on, unless the people were convinced that peace would not be granted by the then rulers of France, upon any terms that could be acceded to. A variety of causes all combined to produce that despondency: the stoppage of the Bank, the defection of our allies, and, above all, the deplorable mutiny in our fleet. If such was then the situation of the country, the terms might have been defended upon necessity; but no man had ventured to assert that the present was a measure of that nature. It was said, that as much was secured by the present treaty as would have been by the *projet* at Lisle; but by that we demanded the Cape and Cochin; and though we gave up much for ourselves, yet we retained the dignity of stipulating for our allies. In that respect the two propositions differed as much as light from darkness. We then stipulated for Portugal, not equivocally but expressly; and we had also another ally who was not omitted in the *projet* at Lisle, though he was abandoned by the present treaty; namely, the prince of Orange. The noble lord had said, that some measures might be adopted in the definitive treaty relative to that point; but was it enough to say that some measures might be adopted? If they had insisted upon an indemnity for the prince of Orange, would the French have made it a matter of sufficient importance to break the treaty? If it should also appear that a great part of the losses of that prince arose from his attachment to this country—if many of the colonies which we had gained came into our possession by an order from him, and which was made the cause of confiscating his property, what could they think of themselves in restoring those colonies without stipulating that the confiscature for this surrender should also be taken off?—His next consideration was as to the guarantee of the integrity of the dominions of Por-

Digitized by Google

tugal. His satisfaction at this part of the treaty was abated at an explanation he had heard from the noble secretary. But, in the first place, he begged leave to protest against the practice of signing preliminaries, which bore one view upon the face of them, but yet were limited by secret understandings between the parties. Let them know what the concessions were, and not betray them into an approbation of terms without knowing what those terms were. The noble lord told them that this integrity was as it had been settled by the treaty of Badajos; and by the explanation of the noble lord, it did not appear but that instead of guaranteeing the integrity of Portugal, it confirmed her dismemberment. But this was not all: the treaty of Madrid and of Badajos gave to France the means of a naval arsenal at the mouth of the Amazon River; and if French Guiana were to extend to the limits prescribed by those treaties, it would throw the whole of the Brazils completely under her control. To estimate the consequences of this, let their lordships look at our Indian dominions. What we had gained there we had gained by the war, and not by the preliminaries; for by the cessions we made to the French in India, we had put our own possessions in a state of great hazard. What he objected to was, the cession of Cochin and Pondicherry. The fort of Cochin was one of the strongest in India; and at the time of the treaty at Lisle, administration had made up their minds that on no consideration would they resign that fortress. When we had driven out Tippoo, and destroyed all competition in the Mysore country, there was no more ground for the French to remain in Pondicherry and Cochin, than for us to cede the Netherlands and yet claim to garrison the barrier town with our troops. They could have no object in retaining those possessions, but to excite the native powers against us. As to Pondicherry, it was of no great importance except as connected with Cochin; but as for the latter, he conceived it to be most dangerous in the hands of France. He asked, what would prevent her, being in possession of those places, from filling them with European troops equal to the number of our own in that country; and if so, would it not form a dangerous diversion, if, when we had any dispute with the northern native powers, we must also dispatch an European force south to protect the Ghauts, and the flat country? Combine this with the cession of the Cape. Much had been lately said of the little importance of the Cape as a point of commerce: he still retained the old-fashioned opinion that it was of very great importance. It was said, that it had of late become the practice to proceed direct to the destination in India, and not to touch at the Cape, which consequently rendered it less important. In answer to this he had to observe, that it was not matter of indifference, in case even of stress of weather, for an East India ship to have a friendly port at which she could enter to refit. But another consequence resulted from this argument: if the Cape was of no value, why retain it so far as to stipulate for a free port? The consequence must be, that this article in the preliminaries must be of no value if the Cape itself was of so little. He asked, was it of no value as a port of war? He had shown that there was a danger of the French excluding them from the ports of Brazil; and if they were also excluded from the Cape, they would have no means of sending an armament to the East. For though commercial ships might proceed direct, yet transports could not. Here was again an important difference between the present preliminaries and the *projet* of Lisle, by which we retained the Cape, Cochin, and Pondicherry. With regard to the West Indies, he was not inclined to undervalue Trinidad; but the advantages to be derived from it were as yet merely speculative. They were told that it was capable of becoming a great military station. It might be so. But what had we given in exchange?—Martinique. That was already cultivated—that was already a military situation: and so far was it from increasing our security, that he understood our military force was to be increased.—He came next to the Mediterranean. There we had possessed ourselves of every thing, and had ceded every thing. Gibraltar, Minorca, Malta, Porto Ferrajo, and Egypt, were all in our hands. The first indeed, we had retained; but every thing else we had given up. The first consequence of our liberating Egypt, was a treaty by our ally with the French, by which they were put in the same situation with ourselves in the dominions of Turkey. Malta we had also given up, which was a most important military station, and had reserved its future protection to a subsequent discussion; but no future arrange-

Digitized by Google

ment respecting that island, could put us in the same situation in which we stood before the war. As the treaty did not specify who the protecting power was to be, it would be indecorous in him to say more upon the subject; but he would add, that in contest with that power he would hold that important fortress as a pledge for our acquiescence in any demands which might be made. He begged to notice a deviation from all accustomed practice in signing the present preliminaries. It had been usual to make the preliminaries as comprehensive as possible, and leave but little to the definitive treaty. It was so in the treaties of 1763 and 1782; and the reason of the policy was obvious, because it fell precisely under the situation of a naval armistice, by which blockaded ports were opened: they could furnish them with naval stores, and make new distribution of their forces. He confessed, therefore, that though the ministers would resist any new demands, yet he was not sanguine that they would obtain any better terms at Amiens. This observation applied to another article, which was left for future discussion—he meant the Newfoundland fishery. England had nothing to wish but that it should remain as it stood at the last peace. What occasion was there, then, to throw open this subject, especially as any new arrangement must be made in favour of France? One point more, as respecting Naples. If we treated Naples as our ally, we ought to to have stipulated effectually for her; at present the terms were perfectly illusory: France was to withdraw her troops, but she might go into the Cisalpine Republic, within sixty miles of Naples; and it might happen, that all which she would get would be a precarious respite of three days.—Having thus gone through the important parts of the treaty, he asked, whether the situation of France justified her in these exorbitant demands? If we treated upon a footing of equality he saw no reciprocity—all the sacrifices were on our part, and none on theirs. The result, in his opinion, was, that we had given them the only thing they wanted—the means of creating a navy, and of rivalling us in our commerce. This treaty would extend their commerce as much as their territory. But why it was done, was not so satisfactorily explained. It was not from necessity, for all the noble lords had protested against that plea, and he rejoiced to hear it. There was one thing farther: if it was not a measure of necessity, was it one of expediency? Were the disadvantages of the war more than the advantages of the peace? He could not think so; instead of security, we stood in greater danger than ever. He saw no motives to submit to such a peace. He would not suppose the threat of invasion could influence it; if it did, that would be repeated whenever the enemy had a point to carry. At the last peace it was necessary to show that the united fleets of Spain, France, and Holland exceeded our own—that was not the case at present, nor could it become so. By the peace, however, we had removed every security which we before possessed. Malta, Minorca, the Cape, Cochin, all surrendered, and our only security was upon the word of France. Much had been said of our reliance upon France. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that the French government had an equal interest with our own in suppressing Jacobinism; admitting, that the republic was a kingdom, except in the name, and that there was as much disposition there to support regular government, as if the lawful heir of the house of Bourbon were on the throne of France: still the ambition of France, as directed against this country, would, under her enormous aggrandisement, be truly dismaying! Even under her monarchy, she at all times manifested a disposition to take advantage of our broils. Why, under the consulate, were we to expect such a different line of conduct? Reviewing the present state of Europe, no man could answer for a long continuance of peace. Ten years of peace were as much as the wisest man would venture to calculate upon. And it was worth while to consider in what degree of improvement the two countries might be, as to the means of warfare, at the expiration of that period, should any possession of ours, or more probably of our allies, tempt the cupidity or ambition of France. It was a serious thing to see the interests of the country signed away. He felt for the members of the present administration every kind of personal respect; but he differed from them most decidedly in this instance. Still he appeared not before their lordships as a professed oppositionist. He would strenuously and zealously support them, after this much-to-be-lamented business was disposed of, in every act of firmness and vigour which they might display in repelling those efforts and repress-

Digitized by Google

ing those principles, which have produced the present war and the sufferings of the European world.—There was one thing more to which he would advert. He agreed cheerfully in the necessity of a peace establishment far beyond what had been necessary at the termination of former contests. The very nature of this peace rendered it doubly necessary. Let ministers, in this respect, behave with wisdom, firmness, and vigour, and they should have his decided support. They were bound to guard against the consequences of their indiscretion. We were now in a new situation. We were enfeebled, but not broken down: we were lowered, but not debased. Some of our out-works had been demolished; many of them surrendered to the foe; but the citadel yet remained; and while it was defended by the noble courage of united Britons, it would bid defiance to attack. We should meet with mortifications and disappointments; but we should, he trusted, still preserve our honour, our constitution, and our religion.

The *Lord Chancellor* entered into a defence of the peace. He was firmly persuaded, that the war had been carried on until it became hopeless to proceed any farther. It was undertaken to guard the country against the effect of principles and practices, which had been propagated and carried on by persons combined for the purpose of overturning the constitution. With this object in view, the war was attended with success; because those principles no longer existed to any extent that could be attended with danger. In advising his majesty to make peace, he would perish sooner than he would sacrifice any of the essential interests of the country; but when he said that, he must not be understood to vapour in praise of the peace, as if it was a very honourable one. His principal object had been the attainment of a secure and lasting peace, and the former ministers had often declared they had no other object in view; but from what had that night fallen from the noble lord, this was very evident, that unless his argument could be displaced from their lordships' minds, this country was gone and ruined. If the representation was true, which the noble lord had given of the external and internal state of this country, he would ask him at what period could he ever hope to make a peace? What were the restorations he would refuse? It was true that this country had got several possessions belonging to the enemy; but had France gained none at all? Had she no dominion over Naples or Portugal? It was stated that, in 1797, all the possessions of France would be restored, had the negotiation at Lisle been successful. A colony restored was certainly the same thing as if it had never been conquered. It was a fact, that, in 1797, a peace had been sought for with the French Directory; but the noble lord should recollect that nothing had been done at Lisle, except proposing the basis on which the parties were about to treat; and there was a material difference between a proposition and an *ultimatum*. It was not, therefore, certain what conditions would have been agreed upon, had the negotiations gone on. The noble lord's observations with regard to Portugal, were not well-founded; and, whatever consequences might arise from the new arrangements with regard to her American territory, it was an evil which could bear no proportion to that of continuing the war. He would not continue the war with a view of getting rid of the war. There were many things which he might have thought necessary to be insisted upon, but which circumstances prevented him from doing. He thought the circumstances under which this country had entered into the war might have imposed upon him a necessity of requiring that a competent provision should be made for the illustrious house of Orange; but he did not in his conscience think he would have been justified in hazarding the success of the treaty by insisting on such a condition; and he had therefore thought it wiser to leave it for future arrangement. With regard to what had fallen from the noble lord, as to the importance of the Cape of Good Hope, he confessed he had himself heard seamen and statesmen say, that it was a place of the first consequence. So far as it served for a harbour to our shipping on their voyage to India, it was of some consequence. This advantage was still to continue; but on what grounds could the cession of this port be a matter of regret? Was it because the place had been fed at a most enormous expense, from which this country was now happily relieved? He would not, then, say any thing about the value of this place as a free port, but if he had no other object in carrying on the war, than that of determining whether a certain point of land, at the extremity of

Digitized by Google

Africa, was to belong to Great Britain or to Holland, and considering at the same time that since this place got into our possession, no less a sum than 125 millions had been spent, and that another year would take away thirty millions more, without this country being one whit nearer the object in view, he had no hesitation in declaring which course he should pursue. The noble lord had found fault with the cession of territory and a port that had been made in the Mediterranean; and had asked what was to become of our fleets that were sailing in that sea? What would the noble lord have said on this subject, had he consented to make peace in 1797, when neither Malta nor Minorca were in our possession? If he conceived the occupation of them, on the part of Great Britain, as necessary to the security of this country, how could he have supposed it possible for England to make a secure peace when we did not possess those islands? As to Minorca, he did not think the occupation of it at all necessary to our security; and as to Malta, if we considered the facility with which it became an easy acquisition to France, it must appear that our security with regard to that port, must be increased with the difficulty of the French being able to take possession of it again, while under the guarantee of a third power. With respect, therefore, to Malta, we were evidently in a better situation than we should have been, had peace been concluded in 1797. As to our ships in the Mediterranean, if they had nothing else to do but to sail round that sea, he thought it by no means an useful employment. There was no use in keeping a naval station there, if we could not command the commerce of that sea; particularly so, if the French had taken possession of Naples and Portugal, as they might have done. As to the West India islands, he could assure their lordships, that if he could have got Martinique, he would have retained it for this country in preference to Trinidad. if it had not been in his power to obtain what he liked best, what alternative was there? Nothing but that of spending thirty millions more, in order that he might be able to ask himself, that day twelve months, how many more years were to pass away before peace could be made? If any noble lord maintained that peace ought to be rejected, when proposed on the terms of the treaty then before the House, on what terms would such noble lord consent to a peace? He knew there were some who thought it necessary to go on with the war until the ancient monarchy of France should be restored. He would not enter into the question how far that was a desirable object; but let it be ever so desirable, he would ask, how it could be done? If the present government of France was an evil, how was it to be removed? It could not be done without a great coalition of the European powers; and even when the combination did exist, it was able to effect nothing. If Great Britain was true to herself, she had nothing to fear from any principles that might still exist in France. She had already read France an awful lesson. The people of this country had reason, from the examples before them, to feel the value of their constitution. The greatest evil that was to be feared, was the effect which peace might have on a small band of people in this country, who might still wish to follow the practices of some disaffected persons in France; but to say that the present government of France was founded on principles destructive to civilized government was an absurdity in itself; and the people of England had too much sense to shed the blood of their countrymen in a civil war, for the sole prospect of gaining something which could never be called a system of liberty. He was confident that the vigour of the law would enable the government to prevent all internal mischief. As to the danger of the peace not being permanent, there was a greater chance of its being permanent now than in 1797, when the late ministers negociated with France. Although he did not attempt to represent this peace as a glorious one; yet it was a peace which, he believed, would be conducive to the security of the substantial interests of the country.

The Earl of *Moira* said, that a noble lord near him (Grenville), among the various other objections that he had urged against the peace, had said that it was inadequate. It certainly was; but how inadequate? Inadequate to the expectations which that noble lord and his colleagues had so confidently held out at the commencement of the war—indemnity for the past, and security for the future. That the peace was a hollow and precarious peace, and inadequate to what we were entitled to expect, he could not admit. In order to decide upon this point, it was necessary to examine the relative situations of the

Digitized by Google

French republic and Great Britain. France was an extensive continental power, and the maintenance of her greatness depended altogether on her army. Great Britain was an insular and a maritime state, and her security rested on her navy. Looking at the acquisitions and conquests of each country, Great Britain stood in a state of inferiority in point of strength and aggrandizement compared to the French republic. To ascertain, therefore, the value of the cessions that ministers had made for the purchase of peace, and to see whether they were necessary sacrifices or not, let noble lords weigh our acquisitions against the acquisitions of the republic. Were all the islands we had taken in the West Indies equally important with the acquisition of Savoy? Undoubtedly not; and yet Savoy was only a part of the immense territories which the army of France had conquered, and which the French government had united to its ancient possessions, and made part of its dominions. To negotiate a peace with any prospect of effecting it, ministers must necessarily accommodate the terms to the relative situations of the two countries, and a precise reciprocity of cession on a pertinacious contest for the *uti possidates*, was out of the question where a weaker power had to treat with a stronger. The reasoning of the noble lord would not only serve to make an early peace impracticable, but to render the attainment of peace hopeless at any period, however distant. He, for one, rejoiced sincerely that peace was effected, he gave ministers credit for having made the best peace they were able to obtain; and it should have his cordial support.

The Earl of *Warwick* expressed his satisfaction that the country had been restored to peace, since it was highly necessary to put an end to the difficulty and distress that all ranks felt, but especially the labouring class of the people. At the same time, he must confess that the preliminaries appeared to him by no means adequate to the expectations that the glorious successes of the country entitled us to entertain.

Lord *Mulgrave* said, it appeared to him that peace was necessary, and if he looked at the *projet* of 1797, and compared it with the present preliminaries, he could not but think that peace was cheaply purchased at the price which we had consented to pay for it. It would puzzle a plain man to find out what beneficial consequences we could expect from prolonging the contest. France, compared with this country, could be vulnerable only at sea; and so glorious had been our success upon the ocean, that there scarcely remained a point in which the republic of France was penetrable. No man surely would be mad enough to suppose that we could make any impression on France by land. The continental powers, with whose united co-operations alone we could hope to produce any effect, had, one after another, abandoned the confederacy. No noble lord had hinted a doubt, that the islands of Trinidad and Ceylon were possessions of infinite value to our commerce, and our power as a maritime state. There remained only therefore to consider the cessions we had made. It could not be expected that we were to hold all our acquisitions in the West Indies when peace was to be negociated. With regard to Minorca, past experience showed, that though of no great intrinsic value, it would always be in the possession of the state most powerful at sea. In the war of 1754, the French conquered it, and took possession. In the war of 1778, we retook it, but ceded it at the peace of 1783. In the late war we had again taken it, but by the present preliminaries we had ceded it. Neither that however, nor the island of Malta, were of material consequence to us, but in time of war. With regard to Cochin, the holding of it was important or not, according to circumstances. While we were masters of the Mysore country, Cochin might be in the possession of any other power, without the least danger to us. The Mysore in other hands, Cochin would be of infinite importance to us. Much had been said by his noble friend about the Cape of Good Hope, who had laid great stress upon its value. Though he had never seen the Cape himself, yet he had heard from professional men, that it had been greatly over-rated in this country; that it was an expensive, unproductive settlement, and obliged to be maintained, ever since we obtained possession of it, at an enormous expense to this country. Let their lordships conjecture what his surprise must have been, when he heard that a right hon. friend of his (Mr. Dundas) had declared in another place, that if a minister should dare to propose the surrender of the Cape of Good Hope, he ought to lose his head. After having gone through his observations on the conditions of the

Digitized by Google

peace, his lordship proceeded to speak of the splendid display of valour and skill exhibited by our army and navy in the course of the war. He said, he felt peculiarly proud at seeing the distinguished object opposite to him (lord Nelson) a living monument of the prowess and intrepidity of our admirals. The conduct of our army in Egypt would entitle them to immortal fame, and those that have outlived the siege of Alexandria, might say with our Henry the 5th, speaking of the battle of Agincourt,

"He that shall live this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam'd,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian:
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say, To-morrow is St. Crispian."

The Duke of *Bedford* said, that the preliminaries should have his support. With regard to the war, which ministers had just put an end to, the noble lord who had arraigned the preliminaries in terms of such severity, might recollect, that it was owing to the ill conduct of it, that an inadequate peace was now made. It could not be forgotten, that he and his colleagues had uniformly been humbled by every turn of ill fortune, and elevated beyond bounds by the return of success. In the one situation, they had condescended to hold the most abject language, and, in the other, they had assumed a tone of arrogance and insult. If it were not at the expense of the country, what a triumph might not he and his friends feel, at the fulfilment of their predictions, that a war so misconducted would surely end in an unequal and disgraceful peace. It was painful to him to allude to matters so often discussed; nor would he have done so, had he not been compelled to it by the speech of the noble lord, who appeared to consider his own *projet*, in 1797, so highly preferable to the present preliminaries, without at all taking into his consideration, the expense of the war for the last four years, and the victories the French Republic had obtained on the continent within that period, which, notwithstanding the extraordinary success of our arms, had placed the French Republic, if possible, in a higher situation than that in which it stood in 1797. He did no more than act consistently with the language he had held for years, in declaring his thorough approbation of the peace, unequal as it was, and disgraceful as it might be. He entertained a lively hope, from what he had heard from the noble secretary of state, that the king's present servants would conduct themselves on principles of more equanimity and less violence than their predecessors; that they would not be forward to show humiliation and abjectness to the strong, and pride and disdain to the weak. He returned them his thanks for having made the peace, and he trusted, that they would follow it up by a full restoration of the constitution to the people, and an immediate repeal of those statutes, which had originated in childish alarm, and unfounded apprehension of dangers that never existed, but in the minds of his majesty's late ministers.

The Bishop of *Rochester* said:—My lords; after what I have heard in this House this night from the gravest authority—in perfect agreement with what I before had heard elsewhere from authority not less respectable—I ought perhaps to be diffident of my own judgment, when it stands in opposition to the sentiments of those whose opinions I have long been in the habit of looking up to with respect and deference; who may be supposed, from the situations which they have held in public life, to be more competent than I can be to form an accurate judgment upon questions like that which is now before us. Nevertheless, when a resolution has been moved, that this House should approach the throne with an address expressive of approbation of the preliminaries of peace with the French republic which have been laid upon the table, I cannot consistently with my parliamentary duty give my vote of assent to the motion, unless a conviction were wrought upon my mind by argument, that these preliminary articles are, at least in the leading points, such as any one who pays regard to the interest and honour of the country may conscientiously approve. My lords, I shall not attempt at this late hour to go into the detail into which I thought to go when I came down to the House thisnight. The attempt indeed is rendered unnecessary, by the great ability with which the subject has already been discussed, by the noble earl who first rose in opposition to the motion, and the noble lord who followed on the same side. I shall therefore compress my argument as much as possible, and state my reasons generally for dissenting from the motion. But I think myself obliged to declare my rea-

Digitized by Google

sons in a brief and general way; because, having the misfortune to disapprove in this instance of a measure of the executive government, which, as I guess, is likely to receive the approbation of a great majority of this House, it would not be respectful either to the House or the minister to give a silent vote of opposition; and I am the more anxious upon this occasion to explain the reasons of the vote which I shall give, because I am aware that it may seem strange, that any one should rise from the bench on which I have the honour to sit, to disapprove of peace.—My lords, I hope my mind is not insensible to the miseries of war: I am well aware how much it is the duty of the ministers of the gospel to promote what they can the tranquillity and concord of mankind, and to stop the effusion of human blood. God forbid, my lords, I should ever be wanting in that duty: God forbid I should not be the advocate of peace. My lords, I now rise the advocate of peace; for, because I would be the advocate of the substance and reality, I must and will be upon all occasions the open and decided enemy of the mere name, the pretence, and the counterfeit of peace. And what is any peace, but a mere name, a pretence, and a counterfeit, which contains in it the seed and germ of everlasting wars? And such, in my judgment, is the peace which, according to the preliminaries upon the table, his majesty's present ministers are concluding with the French Republic. My lords, I shall not go into the detail of the arguments which this topic opens. The subject might at any time be too much for my abilities; it certainly at present is too much for my strength. In mercy to your lordships and myself, I will be very general and brief. The general view of this wide subject, I can comprise, I think, in few words.—What is the present situation of France, my lords? Her present situation is, that she is possessed of a continental territory, which comprehends nothing less than the whole body of the ancient western empire. I call all this the territory of France, my lords, not forgetting that much of it belongs to other kingdoms and states which she calls her allies. But this makes no difference; for such is the French power, that those whom she honours with the name of allies, are in truth, her subjects, or, to speak more properly, her slaves. This vast tract of territory is covered with a population far exceeding any thing that was spread over the same surface when it was subject to the Romans; and this immense population is at the command and disposal of a government more energetic, more united, more prompt in execution, than the government of Rome was under any of her best emperors. This vast empire is fenced on the one side by a barrier of rivers, mountains, lakes, rocks, forts, which render it inaccessible to any of the neighbouring states that would be the most likely to assail it: On the other side, the termination is the whole length of sea-coast from the mouth of the Texel to the harbour of Brest; a coast which will be particularly formidable to this country when France shall have got up a navy; and that in no long time she will have a navy, your lordships cannot doubt, if you recollect what vast forests of timber clothe the sides of the mountains which crown the banks of the Rhine in a great part of its course. Now, my lords, I am very well aware, that our naval strength, and the successes of our navy, had the war been continued, could never have deprived France of any part of these vast continental dominions: But, my lords, I contend, that for this very reason this country ought to have retained the acquisitions of her naval victories; which were ours by the very same right of conquest by which France holds the greater part of her continental empire; and would have been in our hands a great drawback, as it were, from her general strength. My lords, this has been so fully argued by the two noble lords to whom I alluded before, that it is needless for me to dwell upon it: I shall only say, that no answer has yet been given to the arguments of these noble lords,—no answer, I mean, which takes hold of my mind. Noble lords indeed have entered into minute calculations of the value of each article of our cessions taken singly: Minorca is worth only so much,—Malta only so much,—and so on. But, my lords, this is not at all the question, What might be the value and importance of each separately?—the question is, What is the value and importance of the aggregate? My lords, what I ask of ministers is this: Why have they voluntarily ceded to France, without any compensation, in addition to their continental empire,—of which, by the continuance of the war, I grant, we could not hope to dispossess them,—but why have they ceded to them, in addition to that, the absolute sovereignty of the Mediterranean

Digitized by Google

sea?—for that, your lordships must perceive, is the effect of the cession of every island and every port in the Mediterranean and the Adriatic. Then for our conquests in the West Indies. But here I am stopped: noble lords say, that the cession of these same West Indian islands was a part of the project of negotiation in 1797; that in effect that project received the sanction of parliament, by the address which upon that occasion we carried to the throne; and that parliament cannot now disapprove the cessions to which it consented upon that former occasion. My lords, I very well remember that the cession of those islands entered into the projet of 1797; and I admit that the cession at that time was sanctioned by the address of parliament: But, my lords, I must deny that the sanction given to that cession then, binds us to an approbation of the same cession now; for although the islands ceded are in name the same, in value to the French they are very different. My lords, ask the French themselves: their own writers say, "We receive back the islands of St. Lucie, Martinique, and Tobago, improved and enriched by the culture, the industry, and with the capital of British subjects." My lords, they say more; they say that these islands have no value but what they derive from having been some time in the possession of the English. Now, my lords, this being the case, the value of these islands must be infinitely greater now than it was in the year 1797; because they have been four years longer in our possession; and the cession of them might be a measure of sound policy in the year 1797, and a measure of very weak policy in the year 1801. Then, my lords, I ask again, Why have we given the French the key of re-admission to their Asiatic possessions, by the cession of Pondicherry?—which in a few years, I fear, will render our boasted conquest of the Mysore useless, if not detrimental, to this country: we shall have made the conquest not for ourselves, but for the French. Indeed I fear, that by the effect of this peace, it is not for Britain, but for France, that in every quarter of the globe our brave sailors and soldiers have bled and conquered.—My lords, what I dread as the worst consequence of this peace is, the revival of the spirit of Jacobinism in this country. My lords, in this country the spirit of Jacobinism is revived: we have already seen unequivocal symptoms of it. I allude not in this to the tumultuous joy of the rabble of this metropolis, when they dragged the two Frenchmen about the streets: I found my opinion of the resuscitation of Jacobinism on the sentiments publicly avowed by persons who move in a much higher sphere; who have dared to say, that "The terms of this peace are not bad enough for Great Britain—not good enough for France: that the interests of mankind demand that France should be exalted and Great Britain humbled." My lords, I still have hope that this daring spirit will be overpowerered and kept down by the energies of internal government. I should think it a great calamity indeed if that should take place which some noble lords seem to wish,—if the two bills should be repealed which I deem the essential barriers of the constitution; not, as some affect to think them, infringements of it.—My lords, I have freely spoken my sentiments. I hope my warmth has not betrayed me into expressions personally disrespectful to any of his majesty's ministers, from whom I have the misfortune to differ upon this question. In this very measure, which I disapprove, I give them entire credit, not only for great integrity, but I suppose they have been influenced by considerations which might in some degree deserve the attention of great and able statesmen, as no doubt they are; and were I single in the disapprobation of what they have done, I should be very willing to suppose that it was owing to the inferiority of my own talents that I saw things in another light than they. Nevertheless, my own vote must be determined by my own judgment.—Before I sit down, I must say one thing more. The sentiments which I have now delivered to your lordships, I have never given to the public in any other manner nor in any other place. I think it necessary to make this declaration; because I find a report is got abroad, and has obtained credit among my friends, that I have been the author of certain letters addressed to the noble secretary of state for foreign affairs, which have lately appeared in the public prints. My lords, I declare, that however I may agree in the opinions contained in those letters (as I agree indeed entirely),—whatever I may think of the information and abilities of the writer (of which a think very highly),—yet I declare, upon my honour, I am not the author of them, nor have I any knowledge of the author. My lords, I hold my situation

Digitized by Google

as a lord of parliament much too high, to condescend to attack a noble secretary of state in a newspaper, or in any other manner than as I now do, upon my legs in this place.

The Bishop of *London* said, he would detain the House for a few minutes only, being anxious to be heard, lest their lordships should be led to conclude that all the reverend bench were of the same opinion, with regard to the preliminaries of peace, with the right rev. prelate who had just sat down. He was satisfied with the peace, because after nine years of war, and two of famine, in which the people had suffered such severe distress, repose was absolutely necessary to the country, to recover its resources and renovate its strength. Not that he thought our resources were exhausted or would not be adequate to a continuance of the war, had such a circumstance unfortunately been necessary; but that he thought was not the case, because we appeared to have carried our successful arms by sea and land, to every quarter of the globe in which the French republic was vulnerable. It would, therefore, be a useless waste of money and blood, to continue the war without an object. For these reasons he would give the address his cordial support.

Earl *Fitzwilliam* said, after the sentiments respecting the war which he had repeatedly delivered in that House, he could no means consent to give a silent vote on the present occasion. It had been imputed to him, that he was unwilling to agree to any peace made with republican France; but that was not his sentiment. There might be conditions of peace to which he could readily agree to give his support, but they must be widely different from those upon the table. He could not but regard the peace that ministers had made, as a hollow and precarious truce, that carried with it no symptoms of security or permanency. His lordship proceeded to argue in support of this assertion at considerable length. He rested much of his reasoning on the terms of the projet tendered at Lisle in 1797, contending that they were more favourable to Great Britain, considering the then relative situation of the two countries, than the conditions that had now been obtained, which were disgraceful and humiliating in the extreme; and the exultation which the people in general had manifested on first hearing that peace was made, had appeared to him to be extremely suspicious, and to have been the effect of momentary delusion, which would vanish as soon as they should return to their reason, and calmly reflect on the importance of the sacrifices we had made, and the comparative insignificance of the cessions of the French republic. For the two islands of Trinidad and Ceylon, this country had been nine years engaged in war, and had wasted some hundred millions of money, and the lives of thousands of her subjects. Among other objections, not the least was the letting loose of corresponding societies, and giving an opportunity of dispersing the pernicious principles of the French republic to the seditious and disaffected. He highly disapproved of the peace, but, at the same time, he was far from wishing that the public faith should not be kept.

The Earl of *Westmorland* proceeded to discuss the grounds of objection which (earl Spencer and lord Grenville) had urged against the conditions of the peace, and said, that if the whole was a matter of mere terms, as one of them had stated, it was a little extraordinary that those noble lords should insist with so much indignation against the present preliminaries, after they had themselves offered the *projet* of 1797, and called upon that House to concur in an address to the throne approving of that *projet*. He then entered into a discussion of the terms of the *projet* of 1797, comparing them with the present preliminaries, and put several hypothetical cases, in order to show that, the relative situation of the two countries considered, the peace, such as it was, was a desirable one for Great Britain, and that it had been made at a happy moment.

Earl *St. Vincent* rose to take notice of an expression which had fallen from earl Spencer. That noble earl had said, that the preliminaries were attended with circumstances of humiliation and disgrace to this country. His lordship denied that any thing like either attached to them. The preliminaries, he was convinced, were equally honourable and advantageous to this country, and the share he had had in advising them being acceded to, he should ever consider as the pride of his life. By the peace, we had obtained two of the most valuable islands in the habitable globe, considered either in a political or a commercial view. On many other accounts, the peace was a fit subject of exultation.

Digitized by Google

Lord *Nelson* rose to say a few words respecting a point or two, in regard to which no one of their lordships could perhaps speak with more information than himself. And first, with regard to Minorca, an island of little value to us, as at too great a distance from Toulon to serve as a station to watch the fleets of France that put to sea from that port. To speak next of Malta: when the noble earl sent him down, the Mediterranean was in the hands of the French, and on his return from the battle of Aboukir, he thought it his first object to blockade it; because he deemed it an invaluable piece of service to rescue it from the hands of the French. In any other point of view, Malta was of no sort of consequence to this country. It was true it contained a most extensive and commodious harbour, with a strong fortification, which would at least require 7,000 soldiers to man the works. By the preliminaries, Malta was to be put into the possession of a third power, and he repeated, that in any hands but those of the French it became immaterial to us. With regard to the Cape of Good Hope, when the Indiamen were heavy ships, it might have been found useful for them to touch there and refit; but now, since the India ships were coppered like our men of war and swift sailers, it frequently happened that they sailed out to India without touching at any port whatever. He had himself been there, and he considered it merely a tavern on the passage, which served to call at, and thence often to delay the voyage. While the Dutch held it, you could buy a cabbage there for twopence; but since it had been in our hands a shilling was obliged to be paid for a cabbage. It produced little that made it worth holding, and it could not be maintained but at an enormous expense; he therefore thought, that considering the present situation of our territories in India, ministers had acted with prudence and economy in giving up the Cape, and making it a free port. That House had given their sanction to the terms that had been acceded to on a former occasion, and our gracious king had been pleased to assure his people, that he would be ready to open a negotiation for peace, as soon as the government of France should wear an appearance of permanency. Now, could any man say, that the republic of France was not as permanent as that of any other state governed by one man? Upon these grounds his majesty's ministers were pledged to seize the first opportunity of making peace with that republic, and, in his opinion, the preliminaries on the table were honourable and advantageous to this country.

The Marquis of *Buckingham* lamented sincerely that he could not give his consent to the preliminaries on the table, because he thought them highly humiliating and disgraceful to this country. In the first place, he held them to be dishonourable, inasmuch as they did not keep faith with our allies, but left them exposed and unprotected. Portugal, in particular, was most shamefully abandoned, and he could assure the House that the treaty with France, of which they had heard and seen so much, that there could be no doubt of its authenticity although they had it not parliamentarily on their table, had, been ratified since the 1st of October, the day on which the preliminaries were signed. By that treaty with France this country was all but excluded altogether from her former commercial intercourse with Portugal, and if it were true that the cloths of France were to be received as those of the most favoured nation, our manufacturers of woollen cloth would soon taste the bitter fruits of this peace, for they would not easily forget that Portugal, if not now our greatest customer for our woollen cloths, was certainly our oldest customer. So much, therefore, for the good faith of the peace! With regard to the security of the peace, there was nothing stipulated, but we were left to depend solely for its security on the bare word and honour of the person now holding the government of the French republic. What was there in the character or conduct of that person which should give us any just and reasonable hopes, that he would not take the earliest opportunity of breaking the peace? In what instance had he so far shown the milk of human kindness as to lead us to rely on his abstaining from fresh hostilities, as soon as he felt it his interest to recommence the war? Had he never betrayed a rooted jealousy towards this country, an implacable revenge, and a deep-lodged hatred? Was his milk of human kindness so superabundant and overflowing as to wash from his remembrance all his past animosity toward us? Since the signing of the preliminaries, the French had negociated a private peace between the re-

Digitized by Google

public and the Porte, and prevented the latter from feeling a grateful sense of the assistance we had afforded it. So much for the good faith of the first consul of France in the first instance. Let their lordships remember, that by this treaty we had conceded every thing that would aid the French republic to recover its commerce and restore her marine. We had given to the first consul "a giant's strength," and we might be assured, he would "use it like a giant." Entertaining the sentiments he had expressed, he could not vote for the proposed address.

The Earl of *Carnarvon* said:—My lords, the noble and learned lord on the woolsack says, that the present is a necessary peace; he places us at the feet of France, suing for peace, and he laments that more advantageous terms could not be obtained. Other noble lords, speaking with ministerial information, assert, that the country never stood higher; that our resources are unexhausted; that we have treated for a peace, in an hour of triumph, upon equal terms; and they defend the peace, as safe, honourable, and adequate. The learned lord has felt that nothing but necessity could justify a peace so inadequate and dishonourable; and if the other noble lords have truly stated the flourishing state of the country, the terms must appear dishonourable and insecure. The noble marquis has expressed his opinion of the instability of the proposed peace. I confess that I feel no apprehension, that France will not wait till the definitive treaty has put her in possession of all the advantages of this peace; but when we have restored to France, without equivalent, all that she had lost in nine years of war, and to her allies, all that we had taken from them, with small exceptions, and disgracefully submitted to the uncompensated plunder of our friends and allies, she may then pursue, against this country, any object which her policy or insatiable ambition may dictate, and her augmented power may enable her to execute. We are called upon to approve the preliminaries of a peace, which, the moment it is put into execution, will place us in a worse relative situation than at the moment of its signature, or in any period of the war; and we must then depend on the good faith of a nation, not conspicuous for that virtue, and generally esteemed our natural enemy. Some noble lords have silenced all their apprehensions by a persuasion that this peace will have left us no bone of contention; it is a singular argument for the surrender of every thing valuable, that we shall enjoy the beggar's security, who *cantat vacuus coram latrone:* two articles retained by us in this unequal peace, may be objects of future hostility, and meant only as temporary concessions; or the present or future ruler of France may again adopt the maxim, *delenda est Carthago*, before the rest of Europe have recovered their exhausted strength. The learned lord, in his defence of his necessary peace, puts a question on each individual article, whether it was an object worthy the continuance of a bloody war, and the annual expenditure of millions, as if each separate article required a separate war, and its pursuit the separate expenditure of millions, as it may require separate discussions on its utility. The learned lord, who uses a question for an argument, may be answered by his own question, applied to France: Is each separate article worth to her a separate war and the expenditure of millions? The learned prelate truly observed, that the terms of peace were composed of all the articles, and could not be considered but as one good or bad peace, taken conjointly. Those who have considered the peace as a necessary peace, have only considered the state of this country, and have shut their eyes to the state of France. I scarce know any single object worth the expenditure of blood and treasure of a long war, and yet other circumstances in the relative situation of two countries, may make a war necessary: if this peace was desirable to us, was it not equally desirable to France? It may be reasonably imagined that France was as exhausted with the war as this country, and ready to purchase peace upon equal terms. The fact, I am persuaded, was so, and that terms more adequate, safe, and honourable, might have been obtained, had not our negociators ineffectually surrendered the interests of the country. Every article in the preliminaries is concession on our side, and advantage to France and her allies; and so much is left for discussion in the definitive treaty, that the principal effect of the preliminaries will be to show how much disposed we are to renounce every thing for peace. In the article respecting Portugal, nothing is obtained for her; we sanction the terms which France has imposed upon her, by reference to her existing situation, and we may, for

Digitized by Google

aught we know, approve of our own exclusion from the ports of Portugal, which was understood to form an article of that treaty. The comfort given to us by the noble lord, that we may be better by the definitive treaty, and cannot be worse than now fixed, is as fallacious as his former reasoning; for the same observation is as just, and I fear will be more effectual, in the mouth of France, that they also may be better by the definitive treaty, and cannot without folly be worse; and then all the undecided points will probably be influenced by the same predominant influence which dictated the preliminaries; and it is impossible, under these circumstances, that I should approve the preliminaries as (under the existing circumstances) safe, adequate and honourable, or that it will produce such a peace, as the speeches from the throne have from the commencement of the war till this hour held out to the country.

Lord *Hobart* replied to the leading arguments that had been urged against the motion. With regard to Portugal, he said, the noble lord was under a mistake with respect to the possibility of the French being enabled by the treaty they had concluded with Portugal, to erect a port within 100 miles of the river Amazons, in South America, as far as depended on the river Arrouara being the limitation of the cession made to France. And as to the alarm taken by the noble marquis with respect to our being excluded from the usual exercise of our commercial intercourse with Portugal, there was undoubtedly an article in the treaty between that country and the French republic, which excluded us from all commercial intercourse with Portugal during the war; but, on the termination of the war, the exclusion was to cease and determine. As to the mutiny in our fleets having been one reason for forming the *projet* in 1797, in terms so favourable to the French, let it be remembered, that the mutiny was at an end before that *projet* was tendered to the French at Lisle, because lord Duncan's victory over the Dutch fleet took place in that year, which proved that there was no mutiny remaining; and after that, his majesty expressed his inclination, notwithstanding the success of his arms, to listen to any terms that might be safe and honourable to this country. His lordship supported lord Mulgrave's declaration, that Cochin was now of no importance to us, while we had possession of the Mysore territory; and that noble lord might, he said, have added, that Cochin was no port, that it had a bar before it, so that none but small craft could approach it. With regard to the cape, it could only be kept at an enormous expense to this country; it had already cost us a million of money; we had, on our first taking possession of it, imported home all the corn we found there, hoping to supply this country, and the consequence had been, that we had since, even during the great scarcity, been obliged to re-export corn to the Cape, to preserve the settlement from starving. As to any necessity for ships to touch there in their passage to India, he denied it to exist. With regard to the alarm, that the peace would encourage the seditious societies, and the agents of French principles, there was no ground for it. In the first place, France herself had abandoned those pernicious doctrines that the republic at one time held, and disavowed that extraordinary declaration of their determined purpose to overthrow all the established governments of Europe; and as to any apprehensions of the Corresponding Societies, and the advantage that domestic traitors might be inclined to take of the peace, he could assure the House, that already all the societies and disaffected persons shrunk their heads with shame and despair, exasperated, that so effectual an end was put to the possibility of carrying their traitorous designs into practice. In the course of the debate, several noble lords had taken notice of the stadtholder, our firm ally, and had objected to the preliminaries, on the ground that no care had been taken of him by his majesty's ministers: the fact was, they were not insensible to the stadtholder's claims on this country, for their best interference in his behalf, but it was at his express desire, that no stipulation was made in his favour, in the articles on the table, because an arrangement was negociating, through the mediation of the court of Berlin, which promised a favourable issue. His lordship added a variety of other arguments and observations, in proof that the present preliminaries were the basis of a peace, as likely to be safe, honourable, and permanent, as the country, under all the circumstances could hope for.

The House divided: Contents, 94; Proxies, 20. Not-contents, 10; Proxies, 0.

Digitized by Google

List of the Minority.

Marquis of Buckingham	Earls Spencer
	Caernarvon
Earls Pembroke,	Lords Grenville
Warwick	Gwydir
Fitzwilliam	Bishop of Rochester
Radnor	

The King's Answer to the Lords' Address.] To the Address of the Lords his Majesty returned this answer:

"My lords;—I thank you for this dutiful and loyal address. The satisfaction you express at the foundation which has been laid by the preliminary articles for the final restoration of peace, is highly acceptable to me; and you may rest assured, that I shall, on my part, use my utmost endeavours, to bring this important transaction to a conclusion, in such a manner as may most effectually tend to promote and secure the public interests and the welfare of my people."

Vote of Thanks to the Navy and Army employed in the Expedition to Egypt.] Nov. 12. On the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the following Resolutions were agreed to, *nem. con.* 1. "That the thanks of this House be given to admiral the right hon. lord Keith, knight of the most honourable order of the Bath, for the ability and perseverance with which he maintained his station on the coast of Egypt, and for the effectual assistance rendered by his exertions to the army in that country, in the several important services wherein it has been employed, which so essentially contributed to the final success of the campaign. 2. That the thanks of this House be given to rear admiral John Blankett, and to the captains and officers of the squadron employed on the coast of the Red Sea, for the zeal, activity, and perseverance, manifested by them in their co-operation with the army in Egypt: and that vice admiral Peter Raimier, commander in chief of the said squadron, be desired to signify the same to them. 3. That the thanks of this House be given to rear admirals sir Richard Bickerton, bart. and sir John Borlase Warren, bart., knight of the most honourable order of the Bath, and to the several captains and officers of the fleet, under the command of admiral lord Keith, for the zeal, activity, and perseverance, manifested by them in their co-operation with the army in Egypt, in the several important services on which it has been employed; and that his lordship be desired to signify the same to them. 4. That this House doth highly approve of, and acknowledge, the services of the seamen and marines on board the ships and vessels under the command of admiral lord Keith, and vice admiral Rainier, in the effectual assistance afforded by them to the army in Egypt, in the several important services on which it has been employed: and that the captains of the several ships do signify the same to their respective crews, and thank them for their meritorious conduct. 5. That the thanks of this House be given to lieutenant general the hon. sir John Hely Hutchinson, knight of the most honourable order of the Bath, for the ability, zeal, and perseverance, so eminently manifested by him in the command of the army serving in Egypt, by which the honour of the British nation has been so signally upheld, and additional lustre reflected on the reputation of the British arms. 6. That the thanks of this House be given to major generals Eyre Coote, John Francis Cradock, the hon. George James Ludlow, John Moore, Richard earl of Cavan, David Baird, the hon. Edward Finch, and to brigadier generals John Stewart, the hon. John Hope, John Doyle, John Blake, Hildebrand Oakes and Robert Lawson, and the several officers of the army, for their gallant, meritorious, and distinguished services, under the command of lieutenant general the honourable sir John Hely Hutchinson, knight of the most honourable order of the Bath, by which the honour of the British nation has been so signally upheld, and additional lustre reflected on the reputation of the British arms. 7. That this House doth highly approve of, and acknowledge the zeal, discipline, and intrepidity, uniformly displayed during the arduous and memorable operations of the army in Egypt, by the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers serving under the command of lieutenant general the hon. sir John Hely Hutchinson, knight of the most honourable order of the Bath; and that the same be signified by the commanders of the several corps; who are desired to thank them for their exemplary and gallant behaviour."

Similar Resolutions were, on the same day, moved in the House of Lords by lord Hobart, supported by lord Nelson, and agreed to *nem. dis.*

Debate in the Lords on the Convention

Digitized by Google

with Russia.] Nov. 13. The order of the day being read for taking into consideration the Convention with Russia (see p. 18.)

The Earl of *Darnley* rose, and began with expressing the satisfaction he felt in having occasion to address the House, on grounds so different from those on which he had in the course of the last session found it his duty to offer his sentiments to their lordships, and to propose an inquiry into the state of public affairs, with a view to a vote of censure on the government of that day. He now meant to propose a vote of approbation of the conduct of his majesty's present ministers, but not without previous inquiry into the grounds on which he hoped to have their lordships concurrence and support in regard to the address, which he would offer to their consideration. He could not but give his testimony in praise of the conduct of his majesty's servants since they came into office, contrasted with that of their predecessors, whose servile imitators they had proved themselves not to be. The convention on the table, he considered as a striking instance of this. It was evident from that important document, that they had not continued to bully and insult the powers of Europe; but by a judicious mixture of firmness and moderation, had induced them to relinquish their unjust pretensions, and had finally established, upon an equitable and permanent basis, the maritime law of nations. Upon an admission for the just rights of this country, founded in the pure and unalterable principles of the law of nations, depended altogether the greatness and prosperity of Great Britain as a maritime power. That code of law was not a novel institution; it was as ancient as the introduction of navigation and commerce, and had been explicitly laid down by the ablest ministers of different countries at different periods of time, and had been uniformly admitted by all the states of Europe, as a code of law built upon a basis firm as the rock, because its materials were truth, justice, and the general convenience of all nations. Notwithstanding this undeniable character of the law of nations, such was the nature of mankind, and such the operation of the political interests and prejudices of the powers of Europe, during the existence of a long-continued war between any two of them, possessed of a marine that the law of nations had even in modern times been more than once attempted to be broken in upon, in order to serve the purposes either of assisting one of the belligerent powers, at the expense of the other; or of obtaining advantages to mutual states, which they were instigated to seize upon by the intrigues of one of the courts at war, who were glad to embroil their adversaries, by driving them into a new quarrel, and thus adding to their difficulties and embarrassments. Thus, in the year 1780, while this country was engaged in an extensive and complicated war with France, Spain, Holland, and the United States of America, the well-known confederacy, termed the Armed Neutrality, was entered into by the northern powers, and if they had succeeded in carrying into effect the principles on which that confederacy was founded, a fatal blow would have been given to the commercial prosperity and maritime greatness of Great Britain. Their lordships all knew how the danger of 1780 was averted, but when the glorious successes of this country by sea, and the unparalleled navigation and extension of commerce that we had attained during the war that had just been terminated were considered, it was not to be wondered at, that a jealousy of our superior prosperity should be excited in other powers by the intrigues of one of the belligerent states, and their envy and interests awakened, and prompted to a wish to avail themselves of the advantages which they hoped to be able to obtain while we were, as they might imagine, enfeebled by the enormous expense and continued exertions made during a nine year's war with one of the most powerful nations in Europe. His lordship said, he was persuaded that our resources were far from being exhausted; and that, had it been necessary, we were able to continue the contest, even though a new war had unfortunately been superadded to that which was then raging. He thanked God, the firmness and energy of his majesty's ministers had resorted to the best means of putting an end to their farther insisting on their pretensions, and had afforded them an opportunity of being convinced, from the specimen given them by a noble lord (Nelson) whom he had the pleasure of seeing near him, that if they persisted in their unjustifiable pretensions, this country had the spirit and the power to maintain its undoubted rights. Having thus traced the circumstances that had led to the engagement off Copenhagen, he proceeded to the consideration of the

Digitized by Google

convention which had set at rest the differences that had last year arisen between the northern powers and this country, and established our maritime claims on a firm footing. Among the various parts of the treaty principally to be regarded as most worthy of their lordships notice and attention, the first and most important, was the abandonment of that false and dangerous proposition, that free ships make free goods. This proposition was effectually done away by the third article of the convention, in the different paragraphs of which there was a discrimination and definition of what were to be regarded as contraband of war, and enemy's property liable to seizure. The next point of importance was the right of search of ships under convoy; which was clearly ascertained and admitted, but with the limitation of exempting privateers from the exercise of the right in question. Many good reasons offered themselves in proof of the propriety of ministers having had the moderation to consent to this restriction, and perhaps, it might have been as well, if the right of search had never been extended to privateers; but in saying this, he begged their lordships not to understand him to have given a decided opinion upon this matter. With regard to contraband of war, the third important point to be found in the treaty, it could not have escaped their lordships, that in the third paragraph of the third article, the enumeration of what was to be considered contraband of war in future, with respect to Russia, military warlike stores alone, were to be found. He had no objection to confining that enumeration to Russia only, because naval stores were not the chief of the produce of Russia, and the imperfect state of her marine, added to the circumstance of her seas and rivers being rendered impassable, and locked from navigation during six or eight months of the year by the frost, made it a point of no great importance. Russia could injure Great Britain when at war with France in a very trifling degree only, by the few naval stores she could possibly furnish the enemy with. The matter stood on a different ground with Denmark and Sweden. By the ninth article of the convention, Denmark and Sweden were to be immediately invited by his imperial majesty, in the name of the two contracting parties, to accede to the present convention, and at the same time to renew and confirm their respective treaties of commerce with his Britannic majesty." By the treaty with Denmark of 1670, as explained by a subsequent treaty concluded in 1780, and by that of 1661, concluded with Sweden, naval stores are deemed contraband of war, and are considered as such by the law of nations, in respect to all other nations who are not protected by the special conditions of a treaty. The fourth important matter to be found in the treaty, was explained in the fourth paragraph of the third article, and defined the character of a blockaded port. By the words of that paragraph, the denomination of a blockaded port is given only to a port where there is, by the disposition of the power, which attacks it with ships stationary, or sufficiently near, an evident danger of entering. The term "sufficiently near" extended beyond the assumption of the armed neutrality, and placed in question as to what constituted a blockaded port, on an explicit and satisfactory ground. Having stated that these four points were the most important of all provided for in the treaty, and ascertained and established by it, and having expatiated at some length upon each, his lordship took notice of the first paragraph of the third article, viz. "that the ships of the neutral power may navigate freely to the ports, and upon the coasts of the nations at war." He said, he thought considerable stress was to be laid on the words "to the ports" as contradistinguished from the words "from port to port," which had been the language of the claim of the armed neutrality. The difference of expression in this particular appeared to his lordship, to secure an effectual prevention of the neutral from carrying the coasting trade of the belligerent powers during war, and it was manifested, he contended, by the definitions and conditions stipulated by the different articles of the treaty, that the ships of neutrals were only to be regarded as free ships when they had, *bonâ fide*, neither enemy's property nor contraband on board. Upon the whole he maintained that the treaty had secured every substantial advantage for which we had contended, though he admitted, that it bore evident marks of haste, and that the wording of parts of it might be liable to cavil, but before any lord proceeded to object to it, candour and impartiality required, that they should take into consideration the very difficult circumstances under which the present ministers came into office; the situation of unprecedented

Digitized by Google

danger and apprehension in which the country stood when the rupture with the northern powers broke out; the unjustifiable combination entered into against the maritime power and importance of Great Britain; the perilous and expensive war in which the country was engaged; the pressure of the public burthens, and various other circumstances, which combined, rendered the part which ministers had to act, with respect to the northern confederacy, extremely arduous and delicate. Nor, he repeated, did he in the least despair of our resources, or doubted the power and spirit of the country to contest the point to the utmost with the northern powers, had such an unfortunate alternative been necessary; he only made these observations to show the difficult part that ministers had to act at the time, and that their bringing their opponents to such terms as appeared on the face of the convention, was the more worthy of the approbation of the House. Indeed, one of the strongest arguments in favour of the treaty was, that it had contributed materially to the peace with France, a matter which he did not intend to consider and discuss at that moment, though he gave it his decided approbation, not because he though it a great and glorious, but on many accounts necessary, and the best that under the circumstances of the case we had a right to expect. If it was not a glorious peace, their lordships must ask them to what and to whom the situation of the country had been owing? To the late administration, and to their misconduct of the war. His lordship concluded with moving, "That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, to return his majesty the thanks of this House for his gracious communication of the convention which has been lately entered into between his majesty and the emperor of Russia, to which the kings of Denmark and Sweden have declared their readiness to accede. To express our just and grateful sense of his majesty's exertions for the maintenance and establishment of our maritime interests, whereby the essential rights for which we have contended have been secured to us, and provision made for exercising them with as little molestation as possible to the commercial concerns of the contracting parties."

Lord *Cathcart* took a summary but spirited view of the general disposition and conduct of the maritime powers of Europe, respecting this country, in the course of most of the wars in which we had been engaged within the last century, and pointed out the particular periods at which they had manifested a jealousy of our greatness as a naval power. Indeed, when it was considered how much our superiority at sea, accompanied by our extended commercial navigation, had been evinced in several wars, but more peculiarly so in the war that had been now brought to a conclusion, it was scarcely to be wondered at, that the enmity of other maritime states should be excited, and that they should easily be made the agents and instruments of those in hostilities against us, who had spared neither influence nor intrigue to induce them to adopt measures, that, *prima facie*, promised advantages to them; and which, as they were likely to distress Great Britain, must at all events prove beneficial to them. The claims which the northern powers had set up during the complicated war in which we were engaged in 1780, was formed under the fostering hand of the late empress of Russia, and assumed the title of the armed neutrality. The principles upon which that confederacy was established, were directly contrary to the known law of nations, and the acknowledged rights of Great Britain. These claims, which threatened the most fatal consequences to our existence as a maritime power, were then got rid of, and had, in a great measure, laid dormant since the affair in 1780, till their recent revival: all the sanctions of public law, the treaties of different nations, the general and acknowledged practice of Europe, the interests of various people were again discarded or despised: A new maritime code, formed upon other principles, and regulated by new theories, was to dignify this age of reason. But we had lived to see the discomfiture of all these vain and envious projects, and, through victory, to arrive at the blessings of peace. His lordship then adverted to some of the most striking parts of the treaty, and pointed their lordships' attention to the mode in which the principle, that free bottoms made free goods, was disposed of. The regulations of the present treaty he conceived to be founded in true wisdom, and to be dictated by a vigorous policy. The conduct of ministers with respect to the northern confederacy was such, in his opinion, as reflected the highest credit, not only on themselves, but on

Digitized by Google

their country, which never, he thought, was placed in so honourable a point of view, or had come off with a greater accession of character than in that instance. He particularly applauded the vigorous and decided measures adopted by ministers on that occasion, in which a noble and gallant viscount then present, and to whom their lordships' thanks were so justly given, had shone with so much lustre; he fully agreed with the noble lord who preceded him, as to the situation of peril in which the country stood at the commencement of the year: The dark cloud that hung over the country at that time, in consequence of a dire domestic calamity, an unsettled administration, the dread of approaching famine, and the severe pressure of the public burthens, darkened the cloud still more, and might have disheartened minds less firm than those of his majesty's ministers; but instead of feeling despondency, they felt that the situation of the country was perilous in the extreme, but in proportion to the magnitude of the danger, they felt that it ought to be looked manfully in the face, and met with measures of prompt vigour and energy. Undismayed by the new war that menaced from the North, they determined at all hazards to maintain the national honour, and assert her just rights; they shrunk not, therefore, from the complicated conflict in prospect, but made ready for the occasion, and were prepared to fight France and her allies with the one hand, and the powers of the North with the other. One could hardly suppose, but a few months ago, that it were possible to stand on the proud eminence upon which we now find ourselves placed. If we looked back, what was our situation? After a long and expensive war, we found ourselves without any prospect of its termination: Ireland in a most unsatisfactory state, affairs at home in a very critical posture: our allies making peace with our worst foe: the northern powers of Europe, to crown all, preparing for a general maritime war, in which we were to fight single-handed. France, too, was in a singular situation. She had, at the commencement of the war, all the powers of Europe combined against her, but by various events, it had so happened, that she had no open enemy left. Dissatisfied, indeed, were many of the continental powers; but it suited not their circumstances to take an active part any longer against France. At this important crisis the decision, skill, and valour of this country, broke through the combination which had been formed against her wealth and greatness. A glorious naval victory opened our way into the Baltic; an armistice ensued with Denmark: our moderation was evinced in the very moment of our success and triumph. Other favourable circumstances occurred, which were all carefully improved by our government. A negotiation was opened with Russia, and the treaty which ensued had been laid before the House. Happily, the first blow we gave in the Baltic led to a termination of the contest; a termination highly advantageous and honourable to this country. The scruple that free bottoms made free goods, and the exemption claimed by our late opponents, were happily resisted, and these questions completely decided by the present convention, which, on the ground he had stated, he fully approved of.

Lord *Grenville* rose and said:

My lords;—If this convention offered to us any prospect of those advantages, which have been so liberally ascribed to it by the zeal of its supporters, they would, in my opinion, be well justified in having claimed for it from parliament an unqualified and unanimous approbation. The ultimate establishment and recognition of those principles, for which Great Britain fought and conquered at Copenhagen, would undoubtedly offer an occasion which we ought gladly to embrace, for just congratulation from this House to his majesty; and, far from opposing such a motion, I should think myself peculiarly called upon to concur in the praises of any statesmen, who had really, in the words of this Address "secured to us those essential rights, for which we have contended," and which I believe to be inseparably connected with the existence of our naval power. Great, indeed, and sincere would be the satisfaction, which I should derive from the opportunity of expressing such commendation.

To the subject of this treaty it has been, for many years, my duty to allot a very large proportion of my thoughts and labours: and the sense which I entertain of its importance to the interests of my country, makes it impossible that I should now look with indifference to the mode of its final arrangement, or consider myself an unconcerned spectator, of a transaction, which is to decide, what rank we

Digitized by Google

shall hereafter maintain among the nations of Europe. It is therefore with sincere concern, that I am about to deliver the opinion which I have formed, on a repeated examination of the convention now offered to the consideration of your lordships. But, on an occasion like the present, I think myself obliged to declare, without reserve, my full conviction, that should these stipulations remain unaltered, our system of maritime law, instead of having been confirmed by the issue of a successful contest, will be found to have been, in all its parts, essentially impaired; its principles shaken, its exercise embarrassed, and its clearest regulations made matter of eternal dissension and contest.

There is, indeed, one circumstance which renders the discharge of this duty much less painful to me than it has been on a former occasion. It is obvious to all who hear me, that, in the examination of this convention, we are engaged in a task, widely differing from that which was imposed upon us by the consideration of the preliminaries of peace. Whatever objections any man may have felt to the conditions of the French treaty, the public faith was pledged to its immediate execution. And those who most lamented, what they thought a wanton sacrifice of the public interest, security and honour, were, perhaps, the last to hope that any farther discussions with the French government would provide a remedy for dangers which threaten, in their opinion, the independence and existence of this country. In the present instance, we have treated, not with an enemy but with an old and natural ally: not with the government of an usurper, who is still manifestly looking for his security in our dangers, and for his glory in our humiliations; but with a lawful sovereign, who has no real interest opposed to ours, and who has shown a decided attachment to the ancient system of connexion, so long established between the two countries. So obvious is, indeed, the natural principle of union between the two empires, that even if the errors of this convention, while they threaten the subversion of the British naval power, did promise some commercial advantages to Russia; we must believe that an enlarged and liberal policy, duly appreciating the permanent and solid interest of Russia herself, would reject the benefits to be purchased by such a sacrifice. Much more, if it shall appear, as I am confident it will, that even these imaginary advantages are, in fact, injurious to the very interests they are supposed to promote, and that the whole system against which Great Britain has contended, the whole code of projected innovations in the public law of Europe, is mutually dangerous to both empires, and can be profitable only to their common enemies, and rivals. In attempting, therefore, to state to your lordships what I conceive to be the defects of this Convention, my purpose is certainly not in any manner to obstruct the king's government, but to convey suggestions which may, I trust, be advantageously improved: not to call the attention of your lordships unnecessarily to the censure or disapprobation of the past, but to propose what may still be successfully attempted, and beneficially accomplished.

There can be little doubt that, upon the grounds which I have already stated, the emperor of Russia will readily consent to any reasonable proposal for the explanation, or amendment, of this convention. Even from those points, which have been intentionally conceded by Great Britain in this negotiation, I think it manifest that no advantage will arise to our ally. Whatever inconvenience or detriment may result from them to the commercial navigation or military marine of the British empire, the loss indeed will be ours, but the benefit will not be enjoyed by Russia. It will be transferred to other powers, in whose hands, according to the natural course of such events, it is far more likely to produce uneasiness at Petersburgh, than to afford to that country any source of profit, or any solid ground of security, or strength. But, it is not so much for the acknowledged concessions, as for the dangerous uncertainty of these stipulations, that we are deeply concerned to provide an immediate and effectual remedy. And in this respect, at least, we may confidently hope to find at Petersburgh dispositions completely favourable. Since, in addition to all those considerations of general policy, which the present state of Europe must inevitably suggest to every well-regulated mind, the mere wish to maintain peace, and to promote, by commercial connexions with Great Britain, the internal improvement of a great and extensive empire, must naturally dispose its sovereign to co-operate with zeal for the final termination of these irritating and hostile discussions. A great, and truly glorious work; but which can be

Digitized by Google

accomplished only by such a distinct and definite arrangement, as being founded in justice, and constructed with provident and comprehensive wisdom, may afford to both countries a confident expectation of its continuance, and may remain for ever a solid bulwark of mutual security. Such is certainly the only conclusion of this business, to which we, on our part, can look with any reasonable satisfaction.

By the weak and temporizing policy, which Great Britain had pursued towards the Baltic powers, in the last years of our contest with America, their inadmissible pretensions had been encouraged and augmented. At the commencement of the last war, we did indeed obtain, by negotiation with all the principal governments of Europe, a renunciation of claims, which have never been advanced but with purposes hostile to this country. Even the wish to re-assert these claims appeared, at that time, to be abandoned at Petersburgh; and this, not only from motives of friendship to Great Britain, but from a juster sense of the real interests of Russia. The principles in question were indeed within a few years after the armed neutrality of 1780, renounced by the practice of almost every state* which had been a party to that league; and in some of the official communications with the Baltic powers, during the war with France, pretensions were advanced, both by the empress and her successor, which went to the full extent of the ancient maritime law of Europe.† The effects of this change of sentiment ensured to us, for several years, the undisturbed exercise of our rights, in those quarters where they were the most important, both to our own interests, and to those of the common cause in which we were engaged. But when caprice and groundless disgust were suffered to interrupt this well-considered system of policy at Petersburgh, the former pretensions of the neutral powers were soon renewed with increased hostility; and it was at last become manifest, upon the signature of the Convention of 1800, that, unless this country could then resolve to meet the necessity of the case, by bringing these questions to a distinct and final settlement, they would always be found to impede our operations, and embarrass our exertions in every future period of difficulty or danger.

It should also be observed, that the confederacy which we had to encounter, at that time, was far more formidable in appearance than in reality. It was, indeed, well adapted, if we shrunk from the contest, to dictate to us the most disgraceful and ruinous concessions; but little was to be feared from its hostility, if it was only met with fortitude, and repelled with energy. The marine of France and Spain, crippled by constant defeat, during a war of unparalleled success to England, was less able, than it may perhaps be found at any future period, to support the exertions of a Northern league. The union of the Baltic powers was neither cemented by common interest, nor by mutual confidence. And even the untoward circumstances of personal disposition and character, with which we had to contend at Petersburgh, justified the expectation, that the resolutions adopted in that quarter would be found no less unsteady and fluctuating, than they were rash and violent. Every circumstance, therefore, appeared to indicate, that those who had been most eager to provoke the mischief, would, in fact, sustain the whole weight of the contest, in the success of which they were, indeed, alone concerned, and to the risks of which they were evidently the first exposed.

It was on these grounds of obvious policy that the persons then in his majesty's service, formed their plan, and prepared all the means of its execution. They had very soon the satisfaction of seeing it justified by the most complete success. Scarcely had the contest commenced, when it was decided by the victory of Copenhagen. The events which followed were still more favourable. At the very moment when the Baltic powers had incurred the penalty of their own precipitation, when their colonies were already in our possession, when their commerce was annihilated, the defences of their own ports destroyed, and the productions of their territories accumulating at home without purchasers, and therefore without

* By Russia, in her war with Turkey in 1787; by Sweden, in her war with Russia in 1789; by Russia, Prussia, Austria, Spain, Portugal, and America, in their treaties with Great Britain during the present war; by Denmark and Sweden, in their instructions issued in 1793, and in their treaty with each other in 1794; and by Prussia again, in her treaty with America in 1799.

† See Russian declaration to Sweden, July 30, 1793. Instructions to admiral Tchatchagoff, July 21, 1793. See also Russian Treaty 1797, Articles X. XI. and XII.

Digitized by Google

value; and when their revenues, sinking under this total stagnation of trade, were unequal even to their ordinary peace expenditure, much more to the exertions of a war against Great Britain: In this critical and decisive moment, a change took place at Petersburgh, which removed every obstacle to the restoration, not only of peace, but of friendship, and alliance with that court. A new reign commenced in Russia; the very first measures of which unequivocally proved, that principles of justice and policy had reassumed their influence in the councils of that great country; a country which has always much to gain by friendship with Great Britain, and much to offer in return; but which can never attempt to profit by our losses, or to engage in hostility against us, without the utmost detriment to herself.

In this situation the negotiations began, which have terminated in the present convention. More favourable circumstances have never offered themselves to any negotiators. No one can deny that we had at least the opportunity of effecting what this address asserts, that we have in fact accomplished; and although this convention be in truth very far indeed from meriting that panegyric, yet even this failure is not, I am persuaded, to be attributed to the designs, or dispositions of either party, but to the unfortunate precipitation produced by a mutual impatience, to accelerate the restoration of harmony and confidence.

It is, however, manifest, as I have already observed, that the occasion did most urgently demand a full and final settlement of the questions in dispute. To obtain this, as the reward of success, was the only rational object of the contest; to relinquish it after victory, is to deprive our country of the fair benefit of her own exertions. The means of such an arrangement as we ought to wish for, were completely in our hands; the dispositions were such as we could ourselves have most desired; and we had nothing to ask but what we had recently claimed in concert with Russia, what we had enjoyed in common with her, and what her true interests would always lead her to assert and to maintain for herself as well as for Great Britain. Fortunately, the same advantages are still, in great degree, subsisting. The dispositions, I trust, are the same; the interests certainly are unchanged. If, therefore, this charter of our future strength, this warrant of assurance for the undisturbed enjoyment of rights essential to our naval power, be still deficient in that precision and certainty, which could alone constitute its value, it behoves us to pursue with earnestness the means of full and satisfactory explanation, now, while the circumstances are still propitious, while the opportunity is still such as the most ardent hopes could hardly have anticipated.

Such ought, more particularly, to be the anxious wish of those who have borne any part in the formation of this treaty, and whose characters must answer to posterity for the consequences of all its imperfections. And let me add, such I am convinced is accordingly, at this very hour, the conduct which the king's government is actually pursuing. That some additional explanations have been proposed, and some fresh negotiations entered into upon this subject, even if it were not matter of public notoriety, would, to any man conversant in such transactions, be sufficiently apparent from the single circumstance of the long delay in the official publication of the treaty. Far from implying a censure, I hope I am understood to express, as I feel, the fullest approbation of this endeavour. No sentiment, no word shall fall from me, which can impede its success. My first desire is to assist it, and my only object is, by these observations, to impress on the minds of those who are to conduct it, the duty of pursuing it with zeal, and of extending it as far as the necessity of the case does really require. I must, however, agree with a noble lord behind me, that the course of proceeding, which under these circumstances is proposed to parliament, is, to say the least, extremely inconvenient, as I believe it is wholly without example. We are called upon to consider this arrangement, before it is possible that we should know its extent and operation, or satisfy our minds how far it will affect the essential interests of our country. The fact of the accession of Sweden and Denmark to this treaty has been stated to us; but the noble lord has truly observed, that until we shall know the precise terms of that accession, we must remain ignorant whether one material point of difference be not left without even an attempt to explain, or to adjust it. The British government has differed from that of Sweden as to the true interpretation of an article in our former treaties, which con-

Digitized by Google

tains the enumeration of contraband. I have myself no doubt on which side the justice of that question rests; I am clear it is with this country. But to assert, that the question has not been disputed, would be to violate the truth; and whether it be settled or not by the present arrangement, no man can pronounce with certainty till the Swedish instrument of accession shall be laid before him.

But, if the noble lord's remark be thus evidently just and striking, when applied only to a single and detached question, perhaps intended to be left unsettled, what shall we say, if the same observation be equally true with respect to the very substance and essence of the whole treaty, which we are now called upon to approve? If some of the essential rights, for which we have contended, are, as I trust and believe, to be secured to us by the result of those explanations which are still depending at Petersburgh, it manifestly follows, that the extent and value of that security must be judged of by an examination, not of this treaty, which we are now considering, but of some new articles, declarations, or notes, of which we are as yet completely ignorant. It would surely have been a more natural, I may add, a more respectful, conduct on the part of government, to have stated these circumstances openly to parliament, and to have postponed our examination of the measure, until it could be presented to us in that more perfect form, in which it is intended finally to stand. What we are now desired to do is nothing less than this: to pronounce upon the merits of a treaty, of which we know not what the conditions may ultimately be; and to declare those stipulations to be complete and satisfactory, which their authors themselves consider as requiring farther explanations, additions, or amendments. And if the discussions now depending shall, as I trust they will, be attended with success, your lordships must again be called upon to thank his majesty, for obtaining, by fresh negotiations, that identical security, which this address declares to be now completely acquired by the conditions of the treaty in its present form.

Not wishing to dwell more on this topic, I will now endeavour to lay before your lordships, as clearly as I can, and in the order pursued by the treaty, those principles of maritime law, for the maintenance of which we armed, and which this country was publicly pledged not to abandon but with its existence: and I will then submit to your lordships, in the same order, what appears to me to be the effect and bearing of these articles, as they now stand, upon each of the principles so stated. But before I enter on this inquiry, there is one farther observation, which I wish to impress upon the minds of all those who may consider any part of this question as worthy of their attention. In examining the tenour and effect of these articles, and in stating the sense, which will, as I think, hereafter be affixed to them by neutral powers, it is not my wish to persuade your lordships, (nor am I, indeed, myself persuaded), that such are the only interpretations of which the expressions themselves may possibly be susceptible. I do not even assert that they are, in every instance, those which, on the result of a doubtful balance, might be adopted by an impartial arbitrator, if such could ever be found to determine national questions between independent governments.

It is more than enough, for every purpose of this statement, if it shall appear that these articles are, in fact, ambiguous, and that they will fairly admit of contrary constructions. The subject is one which requires the utmost precision; the public interests call loudly for it, and, if that has not been obtained, no time should be lost in endeavouring to supply the defect. I cannot too often repeat, that this is my sole view in addressing your lordships on this occasion. The noble lords in government will not deny, that they themselves have thought some farther explanations necessary, for more effectually securing the objects which were in the contemplation of both the parties to this convention. What I urge, is, that the same precautions may be extended to all the points to which the same uncertainty applies. To do this while the dispositions of the parties remain the same, and the intentions of both are fresh in their recollection, will be not only practicable, but easy. If, on the other hand, from motives which I am unwilling to suppose, from any real, or any affected indifference to these great national interests, from any false security, or any mistaken pride, this favourable opportunity be suffered to pass away, the public mischief may be such, as no future diligence, or ability, can retrieve.

When these discussions are once closed

Digitized by Google

they cannot be renewed, but with difficulty and danger. Whatever shall then be left in ambiguity will be placed in the worst of all situations; in a state where we can neither abandon our right with dignity, nor maintain it with advantage. Where we shall neither obtain the credit which we might claim for its sacrifice, nor secure the benefits which we should derive from its assertion. To how large a proportion of these articles this remark applies, your lordships will judge by comparing them with the corresponding provisions in the hostile conventions of 1780 and 1800. Those conventions were framed with the avowed object of destroying our rights; this treaty is concluded for the purpose of securing them; and the difference of the stipulations, which are to produce these contrary effects on the same subjects, must, therefore, be looked for on the face of the instruments themselves. This comparison is rendered but too easy by a circumstance which I consider as having uniformly, and, in a very great degree, operated to our disadvantage throughout the whole conduct of this negotiation. I am far from supposing that the authors of this treaty can be ignorant of the advantage which a person employed in negotiation must always derive from treating on the basis of his own project, rather than on that of his adversary. They know, unquestionably, that concessions so introduced are often suffered to remain, in order to avoid the inconveniences of farther controversy or delay. That differences, even unintentional, and apparently inconsiderable, in the wording of an article, have often led in their result to the most important consequences; and that the party, who draws any such instrument, will naturally apply his principal attention to the perspicuity and accuracy of those stipulations which are most favourable to the interests he is employed to maintain. The skill and diligence of a public minister is, indeed, often best shown, in the security which he has thus provided to his country, against those ambiguous interpretations, and latent claims, to which the expressions chosen by an adversary might too probably be liable. This advantage, however, as it is known to both parties, cannot always be obtained even by the ablest statesmen; nor is it always equally important. Its value and effect are more or less considerable, as the nature of the subject to be arranged is simple or complicated, resting on undisputed facts, or involved in controverted principles. But it was of peculiar importance that this ground of preference should, in the negotiation of this treaty, have been secured to Great Britain.

Our interest in the whole subject, very far exceeded that of the power with whom we treated. Much of our security in peace, much of our energy and success in war, must hereafter depend on the accuracy and precision of the law, which is now laid down, by this convention, for the conduct of our navy, and for the guidance of our courts of admiralty. It must also be remembered, that the whole subject is involved in difficult and technical distinctions, in matters of detail, and in points of law, often very imperfectly understood by the continental governments, who have so little occasion to study them in their practical application: whereas, in this country, they ought to be familiar to every man who undertakes the conduct of the public interests. And if the king's servants had the smallest reason to distrust their own abilities or knowledge in this respect, they might, for the purpose of framing such a project, have availed themselves of the assistance of some of the greatest men who have ever professed the science of public jurisprudence. But whether this mode of negotiating were more or less desirable, whether it were safer to have treated for the final arrangement of these great questions on the basis of a British or of a Russian project, I must say, without reserve, that no circumstances could require from the ministers of this country that course which has actually been pursued in the present instance; a course which should, in my opinion, have been decidedly rejected from the beginning, not only on the considerations which I have already stated, but perhaps still more on that of the national honour and the dignity of the British crown.

In the form and wording of all these articles, the two hostile conventions of armed neutrality have have been followed with a scrupulous and servile exactness wherever they could be made to apply. We have, therefore, negotiated and concluded this treaty, not on the basis of any British, or even of any new Russian project, but on that of the very same hostile and inadmissible conventions, which we actually went to war for the purpose of annulling. And we now stand, in the

Digitized by Google

face of Europe, no longer as resisting, but as acceding to the treaties of armed neutrality; with modifications indeed, and changes in some important points; but sanctioning, by this concession, the general weight and authority of transactions, which we had hitherto considered as gross violations of public law, as manifest indications of hostile purpose, and as sufficient grounds to justify, on our part, the extremities of war itself. Whatever principles of maritime law may hereafter be contested, they must now be discussed with some regard to the treaties of armed neutrality. Whatever words of doubtful interpretation are transferred from those treaties into this convention (and many such are so transferred), must, according to one of the best rules of legitimate construction, be explained by a reference to the original instrument, where they were first introduced into the code of public law.

It is, therefore, under this impression, that we must proceed to examine the concessions of the present convention, and to compare them with those claims for which this country wisely determined, at the commencement of the present year, that it was necessary, even under all the difficulties of that moment, to incur the additional dangers of a northern war. What those claims were, is a fact which cannot now be disputed. At the opening of the last session of parliament, they were stated in this House, and, with much more ability in another place, as being included in five separate propositions, or principles of maritime law; every one of which the neutral league of 1800 had bound the contracting parties in that engagement to resist by force: and every one of which your lordships agreed with the government of that day, in considering as essentially necessary to be maintained for the preservation of our maritime strength, and, consequently, for the means even of our domestic security.

The propositions were as follows:

1. That it is not lawful to neutral nations, to carry on, in time of war, for the advantage, or on the behalf, of one of the belligerent powers, those branches of its commerce from which they are excluded in time of peace.*

2. That every belligerent power may capture the property of its enemies wherever it shall be met with on the high seas; and may, for that purpose, detain and bring into port neutral vessels laden wholly, or in part, with any such property.†

3. That under the description of contraband of war, which neutrals are prohibited from carrying to the belligerent powers, the law of nations (if not restrained by special treaty), includes all naval as well as all military stores; and generally all articles serving principally, according to the circumstances of the war, to afford to one belligerent power the instruments and means of annoyance to be used against the other.‡

* The claims of neutrals, for the security of their commerce, can evidently, in no case, be carried farther than that they may continue to trade in war in the same manner as they did in peace. This is stated by Bynkershoek, as the whole possible extent of their demand, which he afterwards proceeds to limit by those considerations which results from the rights of the belligerent. "Quæritur quid facere aut non facere possunt inter duos hostes. Omnia, forte inquies, quæ potuerunt cum pax esset inter eos, quos inter nunc bellum est." Bynk. Quæst. Juris Pub. 1. 9.

† This has long ago been laid down as the universal and undoubted law of nations. See the Consolato del Mar. c. 273. Einecius says, "Idem statuendum arbitramus si res hotiles in navibus amicorum reperiantur. Illes capi posse nemo dubitat, quia hosti in res hostiles omnia licent, eatenus ut eas ubicumque repertas sibi possit vindicare."—De Nav. ob vect. &c. c. 2. s. 9.

"I believe it cannot be doubted, that, by the general law of nations, the goods of a friend, found in the vessels of an enemy, are free; and the goods of an enemy, found in the vessel of a friend, are lawful prize."—Jefferson's Let. to Genet, 24 July, 1797.

The law and practice of France has always carried this claim much farther than the British prize courts have ever done. We confiscate only the enemy's property found on board a neutral ship, but release the ship itself, with the remainder of her cargo. The French ordinances direct, that, in addition to the confiscation of the enemy's property so found, the neutral ship which carries it shall also be confiscated. We release all neutral property which is found on board an enemy's ship; but France considers it as lawful prize. —See Ordonnance de Marine, Art. 7, and Valin, p. 284.

In speaking here, and in other places, of the practice of France as constituting an authority of deserved weight on these subjects, I refer to her ancient maritime code, and not to the contradictory decrees, or to the corrupt and lawless decisions, of her revolutionary governments.

‡ "Les choses qui sont d'un usage particulier pour la guerre, et dont on empêche le

Digitized by Google

4. That it is lawful to naval powers, when engaged in war, to block the ports of their enemies, by cruizing squadrons, *bona fide* allotted to that service, and fairly competent to its execution. That such blockade is valid and legitimate, although there be no design to attack, or to reduce by force, the port, fort, or arsenal to which it is applied. And that the fact of the blockade, coupled with due notice given thereof to the neutral powers, shall affect not only vessels actually intercepted in the attempt to enter the blockaded port, but those ships also which shall elsewhere be met with, and shall be found to have been destined to such port, under the circumstances of the fact and notice of its blockade.*

5. That the right of visiting and examining neutral vessels, is a necessary consequence of these principles. And that, by the law of nations (when unrestrained by treaty) this right is not in any manner affected, by the presence of a neutral ship of war, having under its convoy merchants ships, either of its own nation, or of any other country.†

Having thus faithfully recited these propositions, it is not necessary that I should here repeat those arguments which have long since undeniably established both the justice of the principles themselves. and their infinite importance to the interests of this country. The very address to which your lordships are about to accede, describes them, emphatically, as *essential rights*, and on that ground you are about to congratulate his majesty upon their final establishment and recognition. In what degree they are really secured to us, by the present treaty, is therefore the only point to be now considered; and this question, with the permission of the House, I will proceed to examine in detail.

The first of these principles, in the order in which I stated them, establishes the rule under which the belligerent refuses to neutrals the liberty of carrying on, during the war, those parts of his enemy's trade, from which they are usually excluded in time of peace. This rule has, in our practice, been pricipally applied to the coasting and colonial trade of France. From both these branches of her trade, France has, in every period of peace, excluded all vessels but her own; with such

transport chez l'ennemi, s'appellent marchandizes de contrabande. Telles sont les armes, les munitions de guerre, les bois, et tout ce qui sert à la construction et à l'armement des vaisseaux de guerre."—Vattel, c. 7, s. 112. See also the letter of the American government to Mr. Pinckney, their minister at Paris, dated January 16th, 1797, which expressly declares, that by the law of nations, timber and other naval stores, are contraband of war. These are quoted as the two last authorities of undoubted impartiality on the subject. It has been copiously and variously discussed by the older writers on the law of nations; but the concise and luminous expression of Grotius includes the whole principle, by which reason shows that the question always must be governed, "In tertio genere (mercium), usus ancipitis, distinguendus erit belli status."—Grot. l. 3, c. 1, s. 5. See also the essay on contraband, by the able author of the History of the Law of Nations.

* The late judgments of the court of Admiralty have set this question of blockade in so clear a light, that it would be an injury to the reader to refer him elsewhere for the law of nations on this point. These judgments are to be found in the valuable collection of Admiralty Reports: a publication calculated to vindicate the national honour from much unmerited reproach; and to prove to the world that Great Britain administers the public law of nations with the same distinguished ability and unblemished purity, which have so long been the glory of her courts of municipal judicature.

† "On ne peut empêcher le transport des effets de contrebande" (we may add, nor that of enemy's property), "si l'on ne visite pas les vaisseaux neutres que l'on recontre en mer. On est donc en droit de les visiter."—Vattel, l. 3, s. 114.

"Tout vaisseau qui refusera d'amener ses voiles, après la semonce qui lui en aura été faite par nos vaisseaux, ou ceux de nos sujets armés en guerre, pourra y être contraint par artillerie ou autrement, et en cas de resistance et de combat, il sera de bonne prise."—Ordonnance de la Marine de France, Tit. des Prises, Art. 12.

The Spanish ordinance of 1718 has an article to the same effect. With respect to the pretension that neutral vessels sailing under convoy, are exempted from this right of search, it is so unanswerably refuted in sir W. Scott's judgment in the case of the Swedish convoy, that nothing can be added to the authority of that argument. The history of the question has since been stated with very great ability by Dr. Croke, in his reply to Mr. Schlegel's pamphlet; and every person who examines those publications with impartiality, must I think, conclude, in the language used respecting this claim by Cromwell's commissioners in 1657, That a belligerent "cannot, and ought not, to put so much faith in particular captains at sea; that in no former treaty any such article is found; and that the neutral powers have no reason to desire any such novelty."

Digitized by Google

occasional exceptions only, as have more strongly proved her general principle of exclusion. But in war she has always found it impossible to maintain these monopolies. Pressed on the one hand, by our naval superiority, which has rendered the navigation of their own ships unsafe; and unable, on the other hand, to forego the resources which depend entirely on these important branches of her commerce, she has frequently endeavoured, under these special circumstances, to open both her colonial and her coasting trade to the vessels of neutral nations. But this attempt has uniformly been resisted by Great Britain; nor have the other powers of Europe been very forward to embark in a commerce which they knew we should justly consider as an interference in the war, and as a manifest breach of all the obligations of neutrality.

The right to carry on unmolested, during war, both these branches of the trade of France, although prohibited in time of peace, was, however, claimed in 1780, by the pretended neutral league, which was then formed for the purpose of destroying our naval power. And when, at the close of the last year, the same confederacy was renewed, with the same views, this unjust and inadmissible pretension was, with many others of the same description, once more openly advanced in hostile defiance to Great Britain. The claim which the confederates thus asserted, was, as far as relates directly to the coasting trade, expressed in the third article of the convention of 1800, under the following words, viz. "That neutral ships may navigate freely from port to port, and upon the coasts of the belligerent powers." The present convention has adopted very nearly the same expressions. By the first section of what there also stands as the third article, neutral ships are permitted "to navigate freely to the ports, and upon the coasts of the belligerent powers." And in the next section of the same article, corresponding also (though with a variation respecting enemy's property, of which I shall hereafter speak) with a clause in the treaty of 1800, it is expressly declared, that "the effects embarked on board neutral ships shall be free, with the exception of contraband of war, and of enemy's property."

Now, my lords, if these words do not actually establish the hostile claim of the northern league on this subject of the coasting trade, they certainly do not, on any fair construction at all, preclude it; and if the principle essential to Great Britain be not (as I fear it is) expressly negatived, it is left, at the best, in a state so very doubtful, as to afford a handle for perpetual cavils, and a copious source of interminable differences. A free navigation to the ports, and upon the coasts of any country, must, I think, imply the liberty of navigating freely, both to and from all those ports, and upon every part of those coasts. If any limitation of this liberty was intended, it must naturally be looked for in the same instrument which asserts, and guarantees, the general right. Some such restraints and limitations are accordingly specified in this article; and these must, I think, in all fair reasoning, be taken to be the only remaining exceptions, to that otherwise unrestrained freedom of navigation and commerce with our enemies ports, which neutrals are henceforward to enjoy. Among the exceptions thus specified, not even the most distant reference is to be found to that principle respecting the coasting trade, which we have hitherto thought, as this address declares it, a right essential to our interests. The liberty of sailing freely to any port of the hostile country, is plainly conceded and guaranteed: but it is not even intimated, much less declared, by any article of this treaty, that this permission is not to extend to ships laden with commodities purchased at any other port of the same country. No man, from reading this convention, could conjecture that we had ever asserted such a rule of public law. The very principle itself is consigned to utter oblivion, and any attempt on our part to renew its practical exercise, will henceforth be regarded as a breach of that solemn compact by which we have recognized the innocence, and guaranteed the freedom, of all neutral trade, not consisting in enemies property, or in contraband of war.

Nor indeed would it be easy to explain, in any other sense than that of a deliberate and intentional concession of the coasting trade, the admission of those words which guarantee to neutrals the free navigation, not only to the ports, but "upon the coasts of the powers at war." If a direct trade only from the neutral country to the ports of the belligerents had been intended, the first words of this section had amply secured it. If it was meant to permit a partial and successive discharge of the

Digitized by Google

different articles of the cargo, at different ports, this also is secured by the general and unqualified permission to sail freely to those ports. And the addition of the words "upon the coasts," cannot possibly have been made with this view; because the words themselves have no reference to this purpose, nor do they even convey the idea to the mind of any man, whether he be accustomed to hear the subject spoken of in loose and popular language, or be expressed with the precision of statesmen and civilians. These words were first introduced into the treaty of armed neutrality in 1780. They were there employed for the express purpose of asserting the right of neutrals to carry on the coasting trade of the belligerents. From that treaty they have since been carefully transcribed, first into the hostile convention of 1800, and now again into this conciliatory arrangement, to which we are hereafter to look for the rule of maritime law. It will not be a very uncandid argument, on the part those who shall maintain that Russia having, in all these three cases, adopted these same words of sailing freely upon the coasts of the belligerents, meant to express by them in each of the cases the same claim: and on the other hand, that if Great Britain had now intended to stipulate for the renunciation of the right which Russia had before asserted, our negotiators would not have selected the very same expressions which were originally used for that assertion, and which even now are capable of no other interpretation, and must be either so construed, or regarded as wholly superfluous.

It would however be difficult for any man, at all acquainted with the nature of the subject, and with the situation and interests of the contracting parties, to believe that this point was in fact intended to be conceded by us, or was purposely involved in doubtful and equivocal expressions. Russia could have no object in contesting it with us: Russian ships will never carry on the coasting trade of the belligerents, nor will that country derive either commercial or political advantage, from obtaining this benefit for the vessels of Denmark or of Sweden, to whom alone it is likely that this stipulation will practically apply. But if this surrender of right was not in our contemplation, I am utterly at a loss to conceive why we should have been afraid to state with openness, and to define with accuracy, the extent of the concessions which really were intended; or why we should have forborne to require in return, that our remaining rights, whatever they might be, should be recognised with the same precision, and guaranteed to us with the same certainty.

I must however acknowledge, that to the next point of which I have to speak, the charge of ambiguity does not apply. On this head the treaty is unfortunately but too explicit. It is clear that we have admitted neutrals to carry on the whole colonial trade of France. That claim is indisputably and unequivocally conceded by Great Britain. I have already stated to your lordships on what grounds of policy and justice we have always hitherto refused to neutrals, during war, the privilege of trading with the French colonies. If this prohibition were once withdrawn, or if it did not attach upon the commerce of those colonies with the neutral ports of Europe, as well as on their direct trade with France, our maritime superiority would, at least in that quarter of the world, be completely eluded: the valour and energy of our navy would be deprived of the just reward which it now derives from its most profitable captures; and the enemy would enjoy, undiminished in war, as in peace, all those resources which are most applicable to increased exertions against the vital interests of Great Britain.

The instructions issued by his majesty at the commencement of the late war,* for the conduct of his navy, were therefore founded on this long-established principle; and the only relaxation of it which had taken place until the signature of this treaty, was by an indulgence granted to the united states of America, on account of the peculiarity of their local situation. That government complained that these instructions had driven the Americans to the necessity of purchasing in Europe, by a circuitous voyage, the articles of colonial produce necessary for their own consumption. If the other European colonies had at that time been open to the trade of America, while those of France were closed by us, the ground of this complaint would have been considerably weaker than

* Nov. 6, 1798. "That they shall stop and detain all ships laden with goods the produce of any colony belonging to France, or carrying provisions or other supplies for the use of such colony, and shall bring the same with their cargoes to legal adjudication in our Courts of Admiralty."

Digitized by Google

it appeared to be under the circumstances which actually subsisted. Or if the complaint itself, however well founded, could not have been attended to by this country, without practically conceding to our enemies the means of bringing their colonial produce to Europe, the paramount claim of our own defence would justly* have superseded every other consideration. But this was by no means the case; it was evident that no vessel laden with French colonial produce, and met with by our cruisers on its passage to Europe, could allege a destination to New York, or Boston, which the mere fact of the course she was pursuing would sufficiently disprove; whereas if a voyage to Hamburgh or Copenhagen had been equally permitted, the same ship might proceed under this pretence to the very mouths of the French ports, waiting the first opportunity to enter safely, if not into Bourdeaux or Marseilles, at least into Cherbourg, Havre, or Dunkirk. Nor was it likely that the direct trade from the Islands to America could, under the peculiar circumstances of a war which had placed in our hands almost the whole of the West Indian possessions of France, be made the channel of any considerable circuitous supply of French colonial produce to Europe. On these grounds a relaxation of our principle was admitted in favour of a friendly power; but this was not done by any treaty, permanent, or even temporary; it was a spontaneous act of his majesty's government, resting on the king's authority alone, and subject to his discretion; and depending therefore for its duration, or its renewal, on the continuance or recurrence of the same circumstances which then led to its adoption.

The new instruction issued for this purpose in 1794, by his majesty in council,† permitted neutral vessels, during that war, to carry to the ports of the United States the produce of the French colonies. But in other respects the former order still remained in force; and from that moment, to the close of last year, amidst the numerous, and often groundless complaints of neutrals, I do not recollect that a single voice was ever heard either to question the justice of our principle, which confined their commerce with the enemy to those branches only which they had carried on before the war; or to dispute the correct application of that principle, as detailed in the instructions under which the British navy has uniformly been acting. Yet, in the present treaty, the whole of this long-admitted claim, its principle as well as its practice, is at once surrendered without reserve, and without compensation, by a permanent and perpetual concession. Not one word of exception has been provided for it; nor, as it should seem, has one thought of interest been bestowed upon it.

My lords, I am happy to see that I am honoured with the attention of my noble and learned friend who presides in this House, and whose situation peculiarly calls upon him to insure to his country that some remedy shall yet be obtained, while a remedy is still within our reach, for this unforeseen and almost incalculable mischief. He is the first in station among those venerable magistrates who administer to the subjects of this realm, and to all foreign nations having intercourse or commerce with us, the inestimable benefits of pure and impartial justice. He is also the first in that high commission of appeal, where the rights and interests, the claims and the complaints, not of individuals only, but of states and governments, are weighed with deliberate consideration, and determined with dignified and scrupulous integrity; and if his continuance in that distinguished office shall be as long as his country wishes it, he will often be required to pronounce authoritatively upon the construction of this treaty, and to promulgate from the seat of justice those numerous and important changes which it has suddenly introduced into our whole system of maritime law. I have long known the uprightness and integrity of his mind: I am certain, not only that when he decides as a judge he will forget that he is a minister, but that even when in debate in this House he delivers any opinion on matter of law, he will speak to us as a lawyer, and not as a politician. I take the liberty therefore to address myself to him, as to a per-

* "Lucrum illi commerciorum sibi perire nolunt. Angli nolunt quid fieri, quod contra salutem suam est. Jus commerciorum aquum est, at hoc æquius tuendæ salutis; est illud privatorum, hoc est Regnorum." Albericus Gentilis de Jure Belli.

† Jan. 8, 1794, Art. 1. "That they shall bring in for lawful adjudication all vessels, with their cargoes, that are laden with goods the produce of the French West India islands, and coming directly from any port of the said islands to any port in Europe."

Digitized by Google

son to whose opinion I always listen with unfeigned respect: and I ask him with confidence, whether, in determining a question of property between individuals, any earthly considerations could induce him to assert, that a neutral ship carrying on the trade of the French colonies with Europe (but not having on board either enemy's property or contraband of war), has violated any one of those conditions subject to which alone this convention has expressly guaranteed an unlimited freedom to neutral navigation? Let my noble and learned friend, before he answers this question, look to the second section of this third article of which I have before been speaking. He will there find it distinctly provided, that "all effects embarked on board neutral ships shall be free," with no other exception than those of contraband of war, and of enemy's property.

The sugars of Martinique or St. Domingo, if so embarked, will certainly not be contraband of war. The case which I put to my noble and learned friend, supposes them not to be enemy's property, but purchased by neutrals under a lawful sale. What is then the sentence which he must pronounce upon them? I answer, in the very words of this article, by which he is to judge, "the effects shall be free;" they shall pass freely, without capture, detention, or delay, to Denmark, to Sweden, to Russia, or even to France itself. Would such a sentence be conformable to the present law of nations? Is this now the rule which guides the practice of our cruisers, or the decisions of our courts? My noble and learned friend well knows that it is not. But we must henceforward submit to receive and recognise it, as an imperious and over-ruling principle, which is to silence the concurrent opinions of all civilians, to annul the uniform decisions of all British and all foreign courts of prize jurisdiction, and to be applied, as I shall hereafter show, not merely to the powers with whom we have ostensibly negotiated this transaction, but to the practice and the rights of every neutral state. If indeed any English ministers could be suspected of having deliberately consented to such a sacrifice, one should not have wondered that a sense of the fundamental change which it must introduce into the principles of our public law, should have rendered them so peculiarly solicitous to word it in the clearest and most decisive terms; lest some natural doubts should still remain among the other powers of Europe, whether the British government had really and knowingly agreed to a concession, which must appear to all the world almost incredible. Clearly and unequivocally indeed have they spoken. For your lordships will observe, that the article from which this new and dangerous consequence is to result, does not stop even at the decisive words which I have already quoted: it goes on to state, with a precision rarely to be found in this treaty, that "it is agreed not to comprise, under the denomination of enemy's property, the produce, growth, or manufactures of the countries at war, acquired by neutrals, and transported on their account." Apply these words to the case which I have already stated; their purport and effect must be, that the produce of Martinique, acquired by Danes or Swedes, may freely be transported on their account to any neutral country; or even to France itself, for in that respect there is no limitation. Even this is not all. As if it had been thought that additional words were still wanting to ratify our submission, or that repetition and tautology could give new validity and assurance to this explicit surrender of our rights: the article subjoins (still speaking of the produce of a hostile country, purchased and transported by neutrals), "which merchandise cannot be excepted, in any case, from the freedom granted to the flag of the neutral power."

Now, my lords, let those who have undertaken the sacred duty of maintaining, in negotiation with foreign powers, the rights of their sovereign, and the interests of their country, weigh in their own minds all the effect and force of these expressions. Let them ask themselves, whether any words can be found in language admitting of less doubt? Whether any purpose can be more distinctly expressed by an agreement, or any obligation be more clearly binding on the public faith? The thing spoken of in the treaty, is "the growth, produce, and manufacture of the territories of the belligerent powers." No man, I suppose, will deny that the colonies of France are its territories; or that the sugars, coffee, and cotton, are their growth and produce. The stipulation respecting this growth and produce is, that it may freely be acquired by neutrals, and transported by them without restraint to any other place. I am

Digitized by Google

not aware that even the possibility of cavil is left to us, on this subject, much less any honourable plea, to which British ministers can now resort in defence of this most important right, which all their predecessors have successfully maintained, and the dereliction of which, when coupled with the other concessions of this convention, will place us in a situation hitherto unexampled in the history of the British navy.

Can we now contend that neutrals may not transport to Europe the produce of the colonies of France? Can we even refuse to them an unlimited intercourse with all the ports of all those colonies? Look at the treaty—the only object of which is to define and regulate such questions with a greater accuracy than before prevailed, and, as the preamble declares, "to fix invariably the principles of the contracting parties upon the rights of neutrality." We have there expressly conceded, not in any loose and general provision, having other points principally in its contemplation, but in the precise words of an article, framed for the sole purpose of certainty upon this very subject, that all neutrals "may sail freely to any port of the belligerents;" to their ports in America, therefore, as well as to their ports in Europe: and that their commerce in the productions of those countries "shall be free," with such limitations only as have no relation to this question of colonial trade. Must we then acquiesce in this change, and leave to neutrals the enjoyment of this new pretension? Or shall we, in failure of every other plea, lay claim to some hidden exception, to some implied reserve, by which we intend to profit, but which we have omitted to express? Shall we attempt to argue that the colonial trade is by us considered as a special case, to which this general concession does not apply? Even there also the framers of this article have met us; and, as if they foresaw the evasion, but were determined to guard against it, they have distinctly provided, not merely that this freedom of navigation shall in general be permitted, but that is shall not "in any case" whatever, be refused. On the whole, therefore, I have, for my own part, no hesitation, or difficulty, in declaring it to be my deliberate and conscientious opinion, that any judge, sitting to decide under this treaty as it now stands, and having regard to the obligation of his oath, must admit the conclusion which I have here stated: and that no minister can in negotiation contend against it, without betraying the deliberate and dishonourable purpose of breaking the public faith, and wresting from their true construction the solemn engagements of his sovereign. Nor, until I hear the contrary, will I believe that any man, capable of construing a treaty, can attempt to controvert this interpretation, however much he may wish to excuse the negligence, or hope to palliate the error, which constrains him to admit so dangerous a consequence.

Having stated this as the firm and unalterable conviction of my mind, grounded on reasons which I am confident it is impossible to shake, I think it just to add, in this instance as in the former, that I am thoroughly persuaded this effect was not in the contemplation of the framers of this treaty. It has, I have no doubt, resulted only, like that of which I have before spoken, from precipitation and inadvertency. But I have much more satisfaction in looking to the means of rectifying the omission, than in examining its origin, or in tracing its consequences. I am therefore happy to remark to your lordships, upon this, and upon almost every other concession of this treaty, that they are all points still susceptible of amendment; points on which Russia, disposed as she now is towards Great Britain, can have had no real interest to insist. Very great advantage would certainly result to other neutral powers from this particular concession; and its value to France might be almost beyond calculation; but to the Russian empire it can produce no benefit whatever. The colony trade of France in war, if we open it at all to neutrals, will naturally fall into other hands than those of Russia. If, therefore, in the spirit of conciliation and friendship, we propose at Petersburgh to explain this article in a manner more consistent, both with our rights and interests, we must believe that such an explanation will not be refused. There can be no reason to apprehend that the mere desire of gratifying our common enemies, or rivals, would induce that court to insist on our adhering to an agreement into which we have been betrayed only by negligence or inadvertence, and the consequence of which may produce so material an injury to our naval power.

Having therefore expressed this hope, and trusting that the measures by which

Digitized by Google

it may best be realized, will neither be omitted nor delayed, by those who are charged with the conduct of the public interests, I proceed to speak of the second of the general principles, which I have before enumerated. It is that which is opposed to the pretension that free ships make free goods. It is the principle on which we maintain that the goods of an enemy embarked on board a neutral ship are not exempted from those natural rights of capture and confiscation, which accrue to a belligerent whenever he meets with hostile property, not protected by the territorial jurisdiction of a friend. I am happy to declare, without reserve, that on this point the present convention seems to me to have obtained a sufficient recognition of the just and established principle asserted by Great Britain. Our advantage in that recognition is indeed confined to the single case of Russia, whose commercial navigation is of small extent. With respect both to Denmark,* and to Sweden,† as far as the public faith of nations is to be considered as binding, this stipulation was already contained in our treaties with both those powers, and was perhaps still more distinctly expressed than it is in the article of which I am now speaking. But I am far from thinking that the recognition of the same principle by Russia was therefore of slight importance: and I am desirous to give to the convention, on this head, the full credit to which I think it fairly entitled.

Most sincerely do I wish that the next principle which we have to consider, were left by the result of this negotiation on a like footing of advantage and security to Great Britain. It involves what is perhaps the most valuable of all the interests for which we have contended. It relates to the important concern of contraband of war. But before I speak of the consequences to be apprehended from the unparalleled inaccuracy of this part of the convention, it is proper first to advert to those more obvious and avowed concessions which it contains, and which apply to this essential point. The first of these relates to the duration of the present engagements. Our commercial treaties with Russia, which we had renewed in 1797, for a fresh period of ten years only, had, by a temporary stipulation, admitted the subjects of the Russian empire to carry, in their own ships, naval stores to the ports of our enemies. By the second separate article of the present convention, the treaty of 1797, which had been suspended during the short period of hostility between the two countries, has been re-established for the remainder of its terms; but the period of

* Treaty of 1670, between Great Britain and Denmark, Art. 20.—"But, lest such freedom of navigation, or passage of the one ally, and his subjects and people, during the war, which the other may have, by sea or land, with any other country, may be to the prejudice of the other ally, and that goods and merchandises, belonging to the enemy, may be fraudulently concealed under colour of being in amity, for preventing fraud, and taking away all suspicion, it is thought fit that the ships, goods, and men, belonging to the other ally, in their passage and voyages, be furnished with letters of passport and certificate, the forms whereof ought to be as follow." Here follows the form of the passport, which expressly certifies that the whole cargo belongs to neutrals, and not to either of the belligerent parties.

† Treaty of 1661, between Great Britain and Sweden. Art. 12.—"But lest such freedom of navigation and passage of the one confederate should be of detriment to the other, while engaged in war, by sea or land, with other nations, and lest the goods and merchandises of the enemies should be concealed under the name of a friend and ally, for the avoiding all suspicion and fraud of such sort, it is agreed, that all ships, carriages, wares, and men, belonging to either of the confederates, shall be furnished in their journies and voyages with safe-conducts, commonly called passports and certificates, such as are underwritten, verbatim, signed and subscribed by the chief magistrate of that province and city, or by the chief commissioners of the customs and duties, and specifying the true names of the ships, carriages, goods, and masters of the vessels, as also the exact dates, without any fraud or collusion; together with such other descriptions of that sort as are expressed in the following form of a safe conduct and certificate. Wherefore, if any person shall affirm, upon oath by which he is bound to his king, state, or city, that he hath given in true accounts, and shall afterwards be convicted, on sufficient proof, of any wilful fraud therein, he shall be severely punished, as a transgressor of the said oath." Here follows the form of passport, which is to the same effect as that in the Danish treaty. And the article goes on, after some farther detail, to state, that "if the goods of an enemy are found in such ship of the confederate, that part only which belongs to the enemy shall be made prize, and what belongs to the confederate shall be immediately restored."

Digitized by Google

its duration has not been extended. It will therefore expire within a little more that five years from this time; but the privilege which it conveyed to Russia of carrying naval stores to our enemies, will now not expire with it. The article which contained that concession has been separated from all commercial stipulations, and transferred from the treaty of 1797, which was of limited and short duration, into the present convention, which is expressly declared to be perpetual.* Let not any man that hears me, imagine this innovation to be a matter of inconsiderable consequence. Hitherto, as often as our commercial treaties with Russia were to be renewed, so often was the policy of this concession brought under our view, to be reconsidered, as any change should have occurred in the circumstances of the two empires, or in their mutual relations to each other. In the present state of the commercial marine of Russia, this privilege, confined as it is to Russian ships alone, cannot materially affect the interests of Great Britain; nor is likely that the next five years will produce any essential alteration in this respect.

But is this country equally secure in the perpetual surrender of such a privilege? Are we certain that the marine of Russia will for ever continue incapable of exercising it to an extent highly prejudicial to the most important interests of the British empire? What sentence of irrevocable law, what principle of reason or of nature, has barred all farther progress to a nation which has been raised, within the last century, from a horde of barbarians to rank with the first among the powers of Europe? Or, where is that bold and visionary prophet who, circumscribing by his predictions the exertions of a great and growing empire, has ventured to guarantee to us the perpetual duration of its present territorial boundaries? Has he never heard of the three successive partitions of Poland? Has he never looked to the present situation of Sweden and of Turkey? Or, is he to learn, that it is yet a problem how far that desperate system of partition may at this very hour be actively extending itself on the continent of Europe? The French republic has openly adopted it as the main spring of all her foreign policy, the great instrument of her present and future dominion. Left as she now is by our submission, the indisputed arbitress of Europe, what shall prevent her from inducing the continental powers once more to recur to the same injustice; to quench their mutual jealousies in the blood of their unoffending neighbours, and to seek their own security, not by a manly resistance against her encroachments, but by making themselves accomplices with her in the plunder and division of weak and defenceless states? From the personal dispositions indeed of the present sovereigns of those three mighty monarchies, better things may perhaps be hoped. Happy will it be for Europe, and happy for themselves, if they shall finally reject these revolting projects of illegitimate aggrandizement! But if the danger to which Great Britain may be exposed by the consequences of the present treaty, is to recur as often as the system of partition shall revive in Europe, we may too soon feel the want of some better security. We may find abundant cause to regret that we have not obtained for the interests of our country some more lasting safeguard than can be found either in the constancy of any personal character, or in the precarious tenure of human life

Yet, if it were as reasonable, as it is in fact absurd, to contend that no Russian merchant ship can ever be constructed in those harbours which now contain a military marine not much inferior to that of France; if it were clear that no naval stores could ever be exported in Russian ships from the same ports to which the vessels of all other nations resort in crowds for the purchase of those very articles; if it were certain that Russia alone, of all the powers of Europe, never can henceforth extend her navigable coast, either by treaty or by conquest; if we had no reason at this very hour for wishing to place at her disposal the commanding port of the Mediterranean sea, as the only means which can now preserve it from an absolute dependence upon France; if the benefit of this convention could justly be withheld from all provinces or countries henceforth to be acquired by either of the parties; a principle which we ourselves have never recognized as to our own conquests, nor have maintained against Prussia in the recent example of Dantzic

* Article 8. of this Treaty.—"These stipulations shall be regarded as permanent, and shall serve for a constant rule to the contracting powers in matters of commerce and navigation."

Digitized by Google

yet even then, making all these extravagant admissions, your lordships will still find, that we have, by another part of the convention, materially facilitated to our enemies the means of carrying on with Russia, even in her present state, an extensive commerce in naval stores.

By the seventh article of this treaty (copied with so many other of its stipulations from the hostile conventions of the northern league*) it is provided that the privileges of neutrality shall be allowed to such vessels only as have on board a captain and one-half their crew composed of the subjects of the power whose flag they bear. If these words are to be construed only as limiting the proportion in which the subjects of one neutral may be admitted to navigate the vessels of another neutral, I agree that they must be innocent, because I am sure they are completely nugatory. It must be quite indifferent to us by what neutral sailors neutral ships are manned: or, if we should find any imaginable advantage in the distinction, the powers, whose interests it affected, would very soon, by the practice of adopting and naturalizing the subjects of each other, make it impossible for us, even in a single instance, to ascertain the fact in question. But if this provision be construed, as I fear it will, as superseding every other restraint respecting the crews of neutral vessels; if hostile subjects as well as neutral may henceforth compose one half of the seamen who navigate such vessels, it becomes important to inquire what innovation has thus been introduced into the law of nations, and how far it may affect the interests of Great Britain. By the rule which is now generally received in Europe,† not one half, but one third only of hostile seamen are permitted to navigate a neutral vessel. If it had been meant that this rule should still subsist as to hostile seamen, and that the new provision of the article which we are now considering, should be superadded to it, but confined to neutral seamen only, we must suppose that this intention would have been distinctly expressed. It was the object of this treaty to fix invariably the rights of neutrality. It cannot therefore be presumed, that in treating on this very subject of the crews of neutral vessels, this important limitation of those rights would have been passed over in silence, if it were intended to remain. The plain interpretation of that silence must be, that the old rule is abrogated by the omission, and that, by the positive stipulation, the new rule has been substituted in its place. Russia, therefore, in construing this treaty, which, strange as it must appear, does not contain any general reservation of our former rights, will undoubtedly be well warranted to contend, that in the present case, as in that of contraband, the specification of the restraint implies the permission of all that it does not expressly restrain. If then, in any time of war, a crew, the half of whom are French, may sail under the protection of a Russian flag; and if to a vessel so manned we must allow the general rights of neutrality, and the special privileges of the Russian navigation, can any man doubt that great and essential detriment may arise to us from this concession. France herself, with all her parade of liberality, has not yet granted the like privilege either to Russia, or as, I believe, to any other country.‡ Yet, if this concession from Great Britain were really a benefit to Russia, it might, in some points of view, be less objectionable; but it is to France alone, and in her wars with England, that all the advantage of this article will accrue. A direct commerce, during war, is now authorized between the French and Russian ports, in vessels bearing indeed the Russian flag, but which will be navigatad by a crew, one half of whom are French, and who will consequently have much greater opportunities than any which can now subsist of fraudulently disguising the

* See Art. 5. of the Neutral Convention of 1800.

† "Les Hollandois doivent observer que l'equipage du navire ne soit pas composé de matelots sujets d'un pais ennemi au-delà du tiers de l'equipage: si les matelots sujets du pais ennemi excedoient le tiers de l'equipage, le navire seroit de bonne prise."—Notification to the Dutch, published by the court of France in 1756, Art. 4.

‡ The following passage from a work, recently published in France, to countenance the new principles of neutral law, carries this pretension still higher than it is stated above. "La seule patente par laquelle une nation veut qu'un navire soit traité comme lui appartenant, ne suffit pas, suivant les usages actuels de la mer; mais il faut encore que le capitaine et les deux tiers des matelots soient *sujets de cette même nation*, et que ces matelots soient compris sur le rôle d'equipage."—Azuni Droit Maritime de l'Europe, Paris, an. 6, vol. ii. p. 244.

Digitized by Google

real property of the vessel, and of controlling the conduct of the remainder of the crew.

In stating to your lordship these last concessions, I have proceeded on the persuasion, that they are too plainly and clearly expressed, not to have been in the full contemplation of both the contracting parties. If the fact was otherwise, if these stipulations were originally intended to bear any other than their natural and obvious sense, I have only to repeat, in this case as in the former, that no time should be lost in removing all ground of ambiguity, by candid and amicable explanation. But, among the numerous instances in which such a revisal of the present treaty appears to be essential to the public interests, there is none of such extensive importance as that to which I must next intreat the particular attention of the House. On comparing together the different sections of the third article of this convention, one great distinction between them cannot fail to be remarked, even by the most superficial observer. The two first sections and the fifth, those which relate to the coasting and colonial trade, and to the proceedings of our maritime tribunals, are in their frame and operation manifestly prospective. They provide only for the future arrangement of the objects which they embrace; and they profess to extend no farther than to the reciprocal conduct of Great Britain and Russia towards each other. The third and fourth sections, on the contrary, those which treat of contraband of war, and of blockaded ports, do each of them expressly contain, not the concession of any special privilege henceforth to be enjoyed by the contracting parties only, but the recognition of a universal and pre-existing right, which, as such, cannot justly be refused to any other independent state. This third section, which relates to contraband of war, is, in all its parts, strictly declaratory. It is introduced by a separate preamble, announcing that its object is to prevent "all ambiguity * or misunderstanding as to what ought to be considered as contraband of war." Conformably with this intention, the contracting parties declare, in the body of the clause, what are the only commodities which they "acknowledge as such." And this declaration is followed by a special reserve, that it "shall not prejudice their particular treaties with other powers."

If the parties had intended to treat of this question only as it related to their own conduct towards each other, and to leave it in that respect on the same footing on which it stood before the formation of the hostile league of 1800, all mention of contraband in this part of the present convention would evidently have been superfluous. Nothing more could, in that case, be necessary, than simply to renew the former treaties, which had specified what articles of commerce the subjects of the respective powers might carry to the enemies of each other; and as we find that renewal expressly stipulated in another article of this same convention, we must, in common justice to its authors, consider this third section as introduced for some distinct and separate purpose. It must therefore unquestionably be understood in that larger sense which is announced in its preamble, and which is expressed in the words of the declaration which it contains. It must be taken as laying down a general rule for all our future discussions with any power whatever, on the subject of military or naval stores, and as establishing a principle of law which is to decide universally on the just interpretation of this technical term of contraband of war.

Nor, indeed does it less plainly appear from the conclusion, than it does from the preamble, and from the body of this section, that it is meant to bear the general and comprehensive sense, which I have here stated. The reservation which is there made of our special treaties with other powers, is manifestly inconsistent with any other more limited construction. For, if the article had really no other object in its view, than to renew or to prolong our former engagements with the northern crowns, what imaginable purpose can be answered by this concluding sentence? Was it necessary to declare, that a stipulation, extending only to Russia, to Denmark and to Sweden, should not prejudice our treaties with other powers? How should it possibly have any such effect? How can our treaties with Portugal or with America be affected by

* *Equivoque* is, in the official copy of the present treaty, translated *equivocation*: but this is a mistake; it means *doubt* or *error*. The argument would, however, be equally strong if this translation were admitted. The word *ambiguity* has been here chosen, because it is found in the common English translation of the convention of 1780, from which this preamble is faithfully copied.

Digitized by Google

the renewal of those engagements which had long ago declared what articles might be carried in Russian or Danish ships? But the case would, indeed be widely different under the more enlarged construction which evidently belongs to this stipulation. The reserve was not only prudent but necessary, when we undertook to lay down a universal principle, applying alike to our transactions, with every independent state. In recognizing a claim of pre-existing right, and in establishing a new interpretation of the law of nations, it was unquestionably of extreme importance expressly to reserve the more favourable practice which our subsisting treaties had established with some other powers. And that which was before incongruous and useless, would therefore, under such circumstances, become, as far as it extends, an act of wise and commendable forethought.

On the whole, therefore, I have no doubt that neutral nations will be well warranted in construing this section as declaratory of a universal principle, and applicable to every case where contraband of war is not defined by especial treaty. Nor could we, in my opinion, as this treaty now stands, contend in future wars, with any shadow of reason, much less with any hope of success, against this interpretation, however destructive it must be of all our dearest interests. Least of all can we resist it, when we are reminded, that in a succeeding article of this very convention* we have bound ourselves, by the most distinct engagement, to regard all its principles and stipulations as permanent, and to observe them as our constant rule in matters of commerce and navigation; expressions exactly corresponding with those by which the parties to the two neutral leagues asserted both the permanence and the universality of the principles which were first asserted by those confederacies, and which the present convention so frequently recognizes and adopts.

It is therefore highly necessary that your lordships should carefully examine what is this general interpretation which the contracting parties have thus solemnly declared; what sense it is that they have thus permanently affixed to a term so frequently recurring in the practice and law of every civilized nation, and so intimately connected with the exercise of our naval rights, as that of contraband of war. The explanation given of this term by this convention, is neither drawn from any established usage, nor supported by any admitted authority. It is copied both in its letter and in its spirit from the same convention of armed neutrality, which, as I have often had occasion to remark, have so unfortunately been chosen as the models for this British negotiation. In the first of those hostile leagues the empress of Russia thought proper to declare, that her engagements with Great Britain on the subject of contraband, should thenceforth be considered as the invariable rule of natural and universal right; and that those commodities, which her own subjects were privileged by treaty to carry to our enemies, should not, in the commerce of any other nations, be reputed contraband, except by virtue of some special agreement. In strict adherence to this unprecedented and extravagant pretension, the article which we are now considering, adopts the same rule, and adopts it on the same grounds; enumerating all the commodities mentioned in the treaty of 1797, between Great Britain and Russia, and declaring that conformably to that treaty the two sovereigns acknowledge those commodities alone as contraband of war. And as from that enumeration, every article serving for the construction or repair of ships is carefully excluded, it follows, that the framers of this treaty have made the king of Great Britain publicly declare, that naval stores ought not, in his opinion, "to be considered as contraband of war;" and that he himself does not "acknowledge them as such!"

I must, however, here observe, that if no other objection existed to this part of the treaty except its extraordinary inaccuracy, this alone would make it absolutely necessary to resort to some farther negotiation on the subject. It is not possible that the future interests of this country on these essential points should be left to rest on the unsteady foundations of this precipitate transaction. The most important clause even of this important section, that which contains the very object and essence of the whole, is in one part of it so worded, that, as it now stands, no human ingenuity can extract from it a reasonable meaning. The enumeration of those articles, which Great Britain has by this convention declared to be the only contraband of war, is, as I have already stated, carefully confined to the

* See Art. 8, of this Treaty.

Digitized by Google

implements of a land war, to cannons and firelocks, swords and pikes, knapsacks, saddles and bridles, and the like; and, after going through this list, the treaty proceeds expressly to declare, not only that all other articles whatever shall not be subject to confiscation, but that they "are not to be reputed warlike and naval stores." Muskets and pikes, knapsacks, saddles and bridles, may, it seems, be useful for the construction of ships. But all other articles whatever, all iron and timber, pitch and tar, masts, hemp, sail-cloth, cordage, and the rest, which the ignorance of our ancestors considered as necessary for the means of maritime war, are now discovered not only not to be contraband, but not even to be naval stores. The negotiations now depending at Petersburg, must, however, as I imagine, produce such a correction of this article as may at least make it consistent with common sense, and in some degree explanatory of the meaning which it was designed to convey. Anticipating, therefore, some such amendment, it may be proper for us to consider the clause as if it were already limited to its first declaration, that naval stores ought not, by the law of nations, to be reputed contraband of war.

To judge of the effect which such a declaration must produce on the situation of this country in any future war, it is necessary that we should once more recur to the history of the first treaty of armed neutrality. It was the undoubted object of that transaction, to disarm this country of her naval pre-eminence. Its authors, therefore, did not confine their views to the acquisition of special privileges for their own navigation. On principles the most hostile to our naval interests, they framed a universal code of maritime law,* which they required that every other nation should implicitly adopt, and to which they bound themselves to obtain, either by menace, or by force, the reluctant acquiescence of Great Britain. In pursuance of the purpose thus openly avowed, they professed, on this very subject of contraband, to extend to every other country the special privileges which we had granted to Russia;* and they declared, without reserve, that a commerce with our enemies, in naval stores, was open to every neutral state, under the fundamental principles of the law of nature. Prussia, therefore, although not privileged by any treaty on this subject, yet claimed for herself the undisturbed enjoyment of this hostile trade. And this pretension, extravagant as it may seem, was not only recognised, but guaranteed to her by all the confederates;† who, at the same time, invited every other neutral power to enter into the like engagements, and to partake of similar advantages.‡

If under such circumstances the British government had then pursued the same conduct which has now been followed in the present treaty, no hope could have remained to us of ever re-establishing our rights. If this country had, in that moment, as in the present, adopted those hostile conventions as the basis of its own engagements, if we had then proclaimed to the world, in the words of this article, that naval stores ought not to be considered as contraband of war, and that we ourselves did not acknowledge them as such, can any man doubt in what situation we should thenceforth have stood? Not only would the Prussian claim have been by these admissions irrevocably confirmed, but the principle, thus solemnly recognised by us, must of necessity have been extended equally to every other country. The same advantage must again have been conceded to Holland, no longer fettered

* Treaty between Russsia and Prussia 8th May 1781. The preamble, after speaking of the determination of the king of Prussia to accede to the principles of the armed neurrality, adds—"Cette détermination de S. M. Prussienne répondant parfaitement au desir de S. M. Impériale de toutes les Russies de leur donner une base stable et solide, en les faisant reconnoitre sollemnellement par toutes les puissances, comme les seuls capables d'établir la sureté du commerce et de la navigation des nations neutres en général, leurs majestés se sont partées d'un commun accord à entrer en négociation, sur un objet qui les intéresse au même dégré."

See also the fourth separate article of the same treaty.

* Treaty between Russia and Prussia, 8th May 1781, article 2.

† Treaty between Russia and Prussia, 8th May 1781, article 3.

‡ Treaty between Russia and Prussia, 8th May 1781, article 9. "Le but et l'objet principal de cet acte étant d'assurer la liberté générale du commerce et de navigation, S. M. Prussienne, et S. M. impériale de toutes les Russies conviennent et s'engagent d'avance à consentir que d'autres puissances également neutres y accedent, et qu'en adoptant les principes qui y sont contenus, elles en partagent les obligations ainsi que les avantages."

Digitized by Google

by any obligations of reciprocal assistance. It had before been reluctantly allowed to her as a special privilege and condition of alliance;* it had been recently withdrawn, as an indulgence too great to be continued to an indifferent spectator of our danger;† but it must, under such a declaration as the present, have been once more restored to her, as the inherent right of every neutral power.

The effect of the same principle must, at a subsequent period, have equally been felt in our negotiations with America. By their treaty of friendship and commerce with Great Britain, the United States had agreed, in 1794, to include in the enumeration of contraband, almost every article of naval stores. Accused on this account by the French and Spanish governments of hostility to the interests of France, the American ministers vindicatd their impartiality by an appeal not merely to the justice of the rule, but also to the well-known fact, that Great Britain was immutably resolved to maintain it against every neutral power. They asserted (how truly it is immaterial here to inquire) that a contrary rule would better have promoted the interests of their own country. But they urged, with undeniable reason, that until Great Britain should consent to renounce ‡ her ancient rights, it was not to be expected that America should resist them by measures of unjust hostility.

Those rights we have now voluntarily renounced: and unless the renunciation be itself retracted, we must, in all future discussions with America, when the short term of our commercial treaty shall have expired, abide the consequences of that new rule of public law, which we ourselves have thought proper to proclaim. The same must be our situation with respect to Holland, with whom we have indeed made peace, under the auspices of France, but with whom we are little likely, under such auspices, to renew our treaties, either of commerce or alliance. The same must be our situation with respect to Spain, whenever that power shall think fit to acknowledge herself bound by the preliminaries of peace, to which France alone has hitherto pledged her faith. In the same state we shall stand towards Portugal, if it be true, as I fear it is, that while we boast to have guaranteed the territorial integrity of that unhappy country, by placing her colonies at the mercy of the enemy, we have at the same time imposed on her the ignominious necessity of abandoning her ancient alliances, and renouncing for ever her commercial connexions with Great Britain.* In the same state we shall likewise stand towards Prussia; and in the same towards almost every other maritime power in Europe, which is not a party in this convention. Not one of those powers will be bound to us by any special treaty on this important subject. To regulate their practice, they must look to the general law of nations; and they will find it in our own declarations contained in this very article. We have here publicly deserted our former claim; we have confessed that naval stores ought not to be considered as contraband of war, and that we ourselves no longer acknowledge them as such. We have expressed this avowal in the very words originally selected for the purpose of making it universal; and we have inserted it in our treaty with those very powers who had confederated for no other object than to enforce our observance of it.

If then we shall, in any future war, be manifestly unable to repel, by any just or reasonable plea, the claim of neutrals to trade with our enemies in naval stores, are we, on the other hand, better prepared to admit and recognise it? We,

* See the memorial delivered by sir Joseph Yorke to the States General, 21st March 1780.

† Order in Council, 17th April 1780, which recites that Holland had deserted her alliance with Great Britain, and placed herself in the situation of a neutral power not bound to this kingdom by any treaty; and thereupon suspends all particular stipulations respecting the neutral navigation of the Dutch in time of war, and particularly those of the marine treaty in 1674.

‡ Letter from the Executive Government of America to Mr. Pinckney, 19th Jan. 1797. Mr. Pickering's letter to the chevalier Yrujo, 17th May 1797: "Permit me to say, that our engagements with Great Britain ought to be no matter of surprise to the Catholic king, because his majesty has seen, during the whole course of the American war, how steadily Great Britain persisted, in opposition to the demands of all the maritime powers, to maintain her claims under the law of nations, to capture enemy's property, and timber, and naval stores, as contraband in neutral ships. Could H. C. M. therefore expect that Great Britain would relinquish her legal rights to a nation (the United States) which abounded in materials for building and equipping ships?"

* See the Treaty of Madrid, concluded between France and Portugal, Sept. 29, 1801, Article 5.

Digitized by Google

who so lately armed for the very purpose of resisting it; whose existence depends upon our maritime pre-eminence; and whose naval power can only be maintained by an adherence to the same principles on which it was established? What then remains, but that we should address ourselves with openness and confidence to the ally with whom we have concluded this dangerous stipulation? We have every reason to be confident of obtaining his consent to withdraw the concession, if it has been improvidently made: to rectify the error, if it has been committed through inadvertence: or to explain the misconstruction, if the meaning which the words suggest be really contrary to the acknowledged intention of the parties.

The special privileges of Russia, with respect to this question of contraband, are already sufficiently established, by the renewal of our ancient treaties. To the extent of those privileges nothing is added by this Convention; their permanence, if that point were considered as essential, might easily be secured by a separate stipulation; but to compel us to adhere to a declaration, which applies them universally to every other country, is contrary to the manifest interest of Russia, and cannot be desired by her sovereign, unless he were animated by very different sentiments than those which he appears to entertain towards the British empire.

I pass then to the next question, that of blockaded ports, on which it will not, I trust, be necessary for me to detain your lordships long. The stipulation on this subject is likewise declaratory; and it is transcribed with the variation only of a single word, from the corresponding articles of the two Conventions of armed neutrality. Those articles had declared, in substance, that no port should be considered as blockaded, unless where the power attacking it should maintain a squadron constantly stationed before it, and sufficiently near to create an evident danger of entering. In the present treaty, instead of the words, "and sufficiently near," the contracting parties have substituted, "or sufficiently near." And I have not the smallest doubt, that by this minute change, trifling and unimportant as it is, they did really intend to establish, in their full extent, the principles which Great Britain has maintained on this great question of maritime blockade, and which the article, in its original state, as it stood in the two neutral Conventions, was intended completely to subvert. I have already so often been compelled to point out the inconveniencies of this servile adherence, on our part, to the wording of a hostile treaty, that I am unwilling again to recur to the same topic, though in a case to which it is so peculiarly applicable.

Nor will I even dwell upon the glaring impolicy of resting so important a principle, as that which was here in contest, on the minute and scarcely perceptible variation of a single particle. But there are two farther objections to this stipulation in its present form, to which I am the more desirous of drawing the attention of those who are to explain, or to amend this Convention, because I think some remedy may yet be provided against the mischiefs which must, as I fear, necessarily follow from the words of the article, as it now stands. When we speak, in this article, of the power which attacks the port, it seems to me, that we do in some degree countenance the unfounded assertion, that a blockade by sea, like that by land, require an actual design of reducing, or conquering, the particular place to which it is applied. Whereas Great Britain now maintains, in her naval wars with France, as Holland * formerly maintained in her contest with Spain, that the blockade of one or more of the enemy's ports, or even of a considerable extent of his coasts, may lawfully be adopted, for the special purpose of intercepting his supplies, in order, by this pressure, to reduce him to just and reasonable conditions of peace.

The second objection which I have to state against this article is, perhaps, of still more importance, because it calls in question both the justice and the policy of the whole stipulation, even if interpreted in exact conformity with what, in the most candid construction, plainly appears to have been the intention of the parties. From the very nature of all

* Bynkershoek Quæst. Jur. Pub. l. 1. c. xi. cites the decree of the States General to this effect, in 1630. He adds—"Idem plane jam olim tempore nascentis reipublicæ sanciturn fuerat. Ex edicto ordinum Hollandiæ, 27 Jul. 1584, exteri non hostes, ad portus Flandriæ commeantes, puniuntur navium mercimmque publicatione." And again, when, in 1645, Admiral Tromp "classe obsideret Flandriæ portus," the States General resolved to allow no neutral trade with any of those ports, though, in that instance, they did not proceed to the length of confiscation for the attempt.

Digitized by Google

naval operations, depending so much on the variation of weather, a squadron blockading a hostile port, and fully equal to the execution of that service, may, nevertheless, occasionally be unable to remain either stationary before the port, or even sufficiently near to it to create, at all times, an evident danger of entering. And if, as the words of this article import, the blockade is understood to continue so long only as that danger actually exists, and is, on the other hand, to be considered as being raised as often as the danger ceases, even for the shortest interval, the utmost confusion must inevitably arise, in all cases; but particularly in those of neutral ships met with at a distance from the blockaded port, but destined to it. No such ship can ever henceforth be detained, because by this stipulation it is made impossible that the officer of the belligerent should know whether the blockade does at that moment really subsist; and because the fact of its existence can alone justify the detention. It may, indeed, be asserted, without the least exaggeration, that even giving the fullest weight to that minute verbal change, on which so much is here made to depend, a strict adherence to the letter of this stipulation, in its present form, must utterly destroy our whole system of blockade by cruizing squadrons. In order to enable ourselves to maintain that system, according to our present practice, we must contend for a more liberal interpretation of this treaty, drawn from the general spirit of the negotiation, or from the supposed intention of the contracting parties. In truth, the original article, from which this stipulation has unfortunately been copied, is so confused and intricate, as hardly to be capable of translation, or reconcileable with sense or grammar; and it is therefore but ill calculated to serve as a permanent rule, applicable to all the cases which are likely to arise on so nice and critical a question as that of blockade. It is, therefore, much indeed to be desired, that a new and more precise declaration of the law of nations, on this subject, may prevent those numerous differences to which we must infallibly be exposed, from leaving the question on its present footing.

Without, however, detaining your lordships longer on a point so clear as hardly to admit of illustration, I will now proceed to the last branch of this inquiry, and examine those stipulations of the present treaty which relate to the right of search. Were it not, indeed, for the confident hope which I entertain of seeing the other deficiences of this Convention supplied by the result of the negotiations now depending, I should consider all that regards this last point as being comparatively of very little moment. Not that I am at all desirous of depreciating a claim, which, as a part of our general system of maritime law, I have always thought of infinite importance; but because its whole value is, as I conceive, purely relative, and must always entirely depend upon the extent and nature of those principles to the maintenance of which it is applied. The privilege of visiting, or of searching a neutral ship, can in itself be of very little advantage. It is useful only as it facilitates the exercise of other rights; as it leads to the detection of frauds, and the prevention of unlawful commerce; and as it affords the means of ascertaining those facts which justify detention, seizure, and confiscation. If, therefore, we are henceforth to continue to neutrals the advantages which this Convention guarantees to them, our right of visitation, or of search, could be of little value. When we have opened to them the coasting and colonial trade of our enemies, what should we gain by acquiring the utmost certainty that they do in fact avail themselves largely of that permission? When we have declared naval stores not to be contraband, what would it profit us if we should examine every cargo of that description which is carried to the ports of our enemies? Or, when we have admitted that a port, blockaded only by a cruizing squadron, is open to the trade of neutrals, what purpose would it answer to ascertain the name of every vessel sailing with such a destination? But if, on the contrary, that code of naval law which Great Britain has hitherto asserted, had in this negotiation been steadily maintained, and unequivocally confirmed, nothing could have been more important than to have crowned that great work, by placing beyond dispute the means of exercising those principles, the justice of which had finally been recognised.

Defective, therefore, as I must consider this treaty in its present state, I cannot help believing that its authors will be induced, if not by these suggestions, at least by their own reflections, to apply themselves with diligence and zeal to procure, for the interest of their country, some more effectual and permanent secu-

Digitized by Google

rity. And as in that case it is, I think, impossible to doubt of their immediate and complete succcess, I am desirous to solicit the attention of the House to what I have to state on this one remaining point, which would, under such circumstances, again become an object of very principal and leading importance. The general right of visitation and search follows of necessity from that of maritime capture. If we may lawfully make prize of the ships and property of our enemies, some inquiry is evidently necessary, that we may distinguish them from those which belong to neutrals; or, if any restraints may justly be imposed in war on the commerce of neutrals, it is only by examination that we can ascertain, in any particular case, either that the cargo is innocent, or the destination legal. This is indeed so manifest, that, if we except some idle declamation from the schools of French philosophy, I believe this right itself has never yet been seriously questioned.

But some of those neutral states, whose subjects have profited by speculations which their treaties admit to be unlawful, are always anxious to narrow the exercise of a right, the principle of which they cannot dispute. In this desire, and in a general hostility to the British naval power, originated both the practice of giving convoy to neutral commerce, and the pretension of exempting from visitation and search all vessels so protected. In the very few instances which can be alleged of any ancient practice of this nature, it is notorious, that the immediate object of the convoy so appointed, was to cover an unlawful commerce;* and if history alone had not enabled us to reject this pretension, reason and justice were completely decisive against it. Our cruisers were required to receive the declaration of the neutral officer, as conclusive evidence of a fact which he has neither any interest to examine, nor any sufficient means to ascertain; which therefore, even if it were true, could not be known to him, and which, if it were false, it was made impossible that we should ever be enabled to disprove. All examination was denied to us, except that our ships of war might, if they pleased, send an officer on board the convoying ship, and there receive a communication of the papers and certificates belonging to the merchant vessels of the convoy. But if those papers were regular (and it would, under such circumstances, be strange indeed if they were otherwise), no farther search whatever could take place. This was the pretension, and this the law, which the hostile confederates in the league of 1800 bound themselves to impose by force upon Great Britain, after the deliberate and premeditated act of one of those powers had brought the matter to the issue of open violence.

From my own feelings I judge of those which your lordships must have experienced when you perceived, on reading this Convention, how little benefit we have, in this just cause, derived from the most complete success: how little the British admission of the present day differs in its practical application from that neutral claim, our necessary resistance to which was the immediate occasion of the war. The right of searching vessels under convoy, which was denied by the Convention of the armed neutrality, is indeed recognised by this treaty. But to what purpose it is recognised, we must learn by an examination of the subsequent provisions, which have limited the exercise of a right, the justice of which has been thus openly acknowledged. It is in the first place refused, now for the first time, to all privateers; a circumstance which I mention only for the sake of accuracy; but to which I am not disposed to object. Though I must at the same time declare, that if I think we might fairly acquiesce in this demand, it is by no means for those reasons which I have sometimes heard assigned. In the fulsome and dis-

* In 1656, the celebrated vice-admiral De Ruyter, after lying some time in Cadiz, sailed from thence for Amsterdam, with several merchantmen under his convoy. He was met in the Channel by some armed ships of England, then at war with Spain, which insisted upon search; but upon De Ruyter's declaring, "that there was not any thing in the fleet that belonged to the king of Spain," they desisted, and parted good friends. Yet, after this solemn declaration of a commander who stands so high in the annals of maritime fame, it was afterwards proved, that there was an immense treasure of silver on board these vessels belonging to the king of Spain, and his subjects in Brabant and Flanders, which De Ruyter had assured them he would transport in safety. And so important was the service to the enemy, that, if this money had not been conveyed, the king of Spain would not have been able to have brought his army into the field.—See Dr. Croke's Reply to Schlegel, and the authorities there cited.

Digitized by Google

gusting cant of her false philosophy, France has lately declaimed against the whole practice of commissioning and arming privateers; but she has done so only whenever that practice appeared to offer more prospect of advantage to her enemies than to herself. In the contrary case, no power has ever pursued this system with greater eagerness.* The maxims of the British naval code do not depend on the fluctuating circumstances of occasional interest. They are fixed and permanent; drawn either from the immutable principles of natural law, or from the long-established usage of civilized societies. And whoever will turn from the fleeting dreams of modern speculation, to the immortal works of the great masters of this science, will easily convince himself that no practice can be more consonant to reason and justice than that of carrying on public war in some degree by individual exertions. Nor, although it be true that occasional irregularities may prevail, ought this country to renounce an important right merely because we hear some exaggerated statements of rapine and violence committed by those who exercise it. Such assertions are made with great facility, because it is almost always impossible to disprove them, unless the neutral would pursue his complaint in those courts which are constantly open for his redress. For myself, I must say, that what I have known of similar allegations which have sometimes been made against the conduct of his majesty's navy, and into which it has been my duty to inquire, does not dispose me to give unlimited credit to the assertions of this nature respecting privateers, made by persons who have often so strong an interest to conceal the disgraceful frauds of which they have themselves been guilty, and to deceive their own governments, as well as those of the powers at war.

I proceed, therefore, to consider the stipulations of this article, as they respect the future practice of the British navy in visiting and examining neutral vessels sailing under convoy. I have already stated, that the claim of the neutral league of 1800, confined this examination to a bare perusal of the papers of the neutral ships; which papers were for that purpose to be communicated to the belligerent by the neutral officer, on board his own vessel. Exactly the same proceeding has here been stipulated; and it is added in this treaty, as in the former, that if the papers so communicated shall be found to be regular, no farther search shall take place. An exception, however, is here subjoined, which constitutes the only practical difference on this subject between the two Conventions. It is not, as before, laid down absolutely, that no farther search shall in any case take place, but that none shall so take place, "unless some valid motive of suspicion shall exist." It would be injurious even to ask, whether, in concluding this treaty, its authors meant that it should be executed on the part of this country with justice, with liberality, and, above all, with that unblemished good faith which will, I trust, always continue to be the leading characteristic of British policy. It certainly was not the intention of his majesty's ministers to reserve to their country, under an ambiguous phrase, the power of eluding the whole object of the stipulation to which they have acceded. If, indeed, any such design could possibly have entered into their minds, which nothing but their own avowal will ever induce me to believe, it is manifest that in the present case the folly of such a purpose would, if possible, exceed its injustice. The only imaginable benefit which, in the most sanguine hopes of any man, Great Britain can ever derive from this treaty, is, that by a mutual good understanding, resulting from fair discussion and established by joint consent, we should prevent the future revival of claims which have always hitherto been urged against us in the periods of our greatest embarrassment and danger.

What could be a more wretched policy than to hold in reserve for such periods a concealed and doubtful pretension, which now, in the security of victory and in the confidence of friendship, we have been afraid to avow? Your lordships, therefore, may well assure yourselves, that such is not the intention of the framers of this treaty. They certainly never will assert, either now, or at any future pe-

* By a declaration published in June 1780, the French government notified to its subjects its intention of granting honorary distinctions to the commanders and crews of privateers who might successfully annoy our trade. In the late war, the Directory, despairing of success in any farther naval operations, invited all the inhabitants of the maritime provinces of France to engage in privateers, and offered, for that purpose, to let to them for hire, all the ships of war which remained in their harbours after our victories.

Digitized by Google

riod, that right, from which we have agreed to abstain, except when some valid ground of suspicion shall exist, may still be indiscriminately exercised at our discretion, or continued as the established practice and daily usage of the British navy. It would neither be consistent with their own characters, nor (which is still more important) with the public faith, should they contend that mere individual caprice, that national misunderstandings, that a general disbelief of the good faith of neutrals, or even that a distrust applying to the particular case, but not founded on any special circumstances belonging to it, can furnish that valid ground of suspicion which this treaty has described. Such suspicion must evidently rest on some distinct and separate foundation; it must unquestionably be grounded on some fact, by which the ships to which it is applied can be very clearly distinguished from the common case of neutrals sailing under convoy. Unless this be true, the whole object of the stipulation is defeated, and every ship is liable to farther search. The exception which we have here inserted, manifestly admits the principle, while it limits the application of the rule to which it is subjoined. It recognises the validity of the claim, that, where the papers are regular, the ship itself shall not be visited; and it allows of such visitation only in the single case, where some valid ground of suspicion shall be found to exist.

It is necessary then to inquire what the cases are, in which alone, under the fair construction of this treaty, a British officer can now visit and examine a neutral ship, when sailing under convoy. As the practice has hitherto stood, the inquiry into the facts of the case preceded all conclusion to drawn from them. Our officer first examined the papers of each ship, by going on board the ship itself to which they related. He compared them with the appearance of the ship, of its crew, and of its cargo. He questioned the crew. He judged on the spot respecting an infinite variety of small circumstances, which, taken together, might constitute a valid ground of suspicion. Even with all these advantages, the fraud often escaped his vigilance; and if, after the ship had thus been visited, every thing appeared to be regular, it was stipulated by our former treaties that no farther search should then take place. But the commanding officer decided for himself, upon the facts as they thus appeared to him; and if he saw, from this inquiry, a reasonable presumption of unlawful conduct, he detained the ship, and brought her in for farther search, well knowing that as often as he did so without sufficient cause, he was bound to satisfy all the costs and charges which he brought upon the neutral. In these cases, therefore, the suspicion arose from the search, and the detention of the ship was its just and natural effect. As the law will now stand, the suspicion must precede the inquiry; and it is expressly stipulated by another article of this treaty, that no detention can take place, unless the officer be already in possession of manifest and evident facts establishing the violation of neutrality.

There are very few cases likely to occur in practice, where any valid ground of suspicion respecting a neutral ship can *bonâ fide* exist before the search. Sometimes indeed, but by no means frequently, previous information has been received by the belligerent power of frauds applying to a particular ship before she sails. But in that case, the instructions given to our officers would naturally be, not that they should search, but that they should detain the vessel pointed out in such intelligence. Where this case does not exist, I ask how often it is likely that any valid ground of suspicion should really arise before the vessel has been visited? Can such suspicion exist in the mind of any man, unless it be excited by some circumstances, real or supposed, which have relation to the suspected object? And if not, let it then be considered what it is that a British officer can know, what it is that he can reasonably believe, or strongly suspect, with regard to a ship, the very name of which he never heard before, and which, when he goes on board the convoying frigate, is shown to him for the first time through a telescope, out of the distance of cannon shot? Her sails, her masts, the fashion of her rigging, and her hull, these it is possible he may distinguish. Will these inform him whether the property of the ship, or of all the goods, or of an part of them, be hostile or neutral? Whether the cargo be contraband or innocent? Of what nations the crew is composed, and in what proportions? Whether the object of the voyage be conformable to such special treaties as may apply to it; or whether it be consonant with the general law of nations? Can he even conjecture,

Digitized by Google

at that distance, what concealed articles the ship may carry? What ostensible, and what real papers? What false passports; granted perhaps in blank in Europe, and filled up in the East Indies, with the name of any ship, whose owner is content to pay the regulated tariff of such frauds? * Will he, in such a situation, acquire the knowledge of those details with which the crew might be willing to supply him? Or, can he even satisfy his own judgment, whether the ship be sufficiently victualled and stored for the voyage which her papers indicate? Not one of all these! although these comprise all the principal grounds of suspicion which have hitherto led our officers to the detention of neutral vessels. Every one of these is now abandoned. Our officer knows nothing of the ship in question. He sees nothing of her, from which he can derive any information that could suggest suspicion; and he is permitted to receive no farther knowledge of her than what is supplied by a set of papers, which relate indeed, as he is told, to that particular ship, but which, if fraud be intended, may be kept in the cabin of a frigate for twenty years together, to be applied to every single vessel which may, during that period, claim the protection of convoy.

I see, my lords, now present, some of those noble persons, the memory of whose victories, obtained in support of their country's rights, will ever warm the hearts of Englishmen: whose splendid actions will live in our grateful remembrance, even although that fatal period should already have arrived when their effects must cease to operate: even although we should be found to have renounced, by these stipulations, the very claims which their exertions had established; and to have abdicated, at the same time, by a voluntary surrender to an inveterate enemy, that high pre-eminence of dignity and safety, in which it is their glory to have placed us, and which no human power but our own could ever have impaired. I should be happy to learn from them, or from any other man professionally conversant in such transactions, that any other effect can result from this article. I should be glad, indeed, to hear from the gallant officers of our navy, that, placed in such circumstances as I have stated, and confined within the limits which this treaty has prescribed, any one of them would consent to make himself responsible to his country for his success in detecting the frauds of neutrals. I will suppose that any number of ships, built and rigged in a neutral port, but being actually the property of France, manned with French sailors, laden with naval stores, consigned to the French government, and destined to the port of Brest, when under blockade, should, either by fraud, menace, or intrigue, obtain a neutral convoy. The masters of such vessels would of course hoist neutral colours; they would provide themselves, as usual, with false sets of neutral papers, disguising the property, cargoes, and destination of the ships; and those papers, if the fleet fell in with any of our cruisers, would be duly communicated to the British officer when he came on board the convoying frigate. The papers would then be verified; and, they being found in form, no search could take place, if there existed no valid motive for suspicion. I ask where any such motive can in this case be found? Are there any possible means by which the British officer is to become acquainted with any part of this complicated violation of all the principles which we claim to enforce? Without some previous knowledge of the facts, without some apparent circumstances to direct his judgment, can there arise in his mind any such valid ground of suspicion as would, in good faith, and under any fair construction of this article, justify his proceeding to visitation, or to search? The thing is manifestly impossible. No inquiry is to take place unless there be previous ground of suspicion, and no ground of suspicion can in this case possibly arise, unless there be previous inquiry. It is then but too manifest, that while we have in words established the right of visiting ships under neutral convoy, we have in fact so limited and circumscribed the practice, as utterly to renounce every beneficial purpose to which it ever could, by any possibility, be applied. It has often been asserted by this country, and I think it cannot be denied by any man who understands the subject, that the claim of exempting neutral mer

* This refers to the practice carried on in the last war, under the immediate direction of one of the principal officers of a neutral settlement in the East Indies. The proof of the fact is to be found in a collection of papers respecting illicit trade, printed by our East India Company, for the use of the proprietors.

Digitized by Google

chant-ships from search, by placing them under neutral convoy, is inconsistent with the exercise of any part of the maritime law which has hitherto subsisted in Europe; and that if this claim be either recognised in principle, or admitted in practice, by Great Britain, she must thenceforth desist from every attempt to annoy the commerce of her enemies, or to intercept their supplies. If this be true, no farther argument can be wanting to satisfy your lordships how much it is to be desired that this great question should receive some more deliberate consideration than appears as yet to have been given to it.

It still remains, however, that I should request the attention of the House to one additional remark, which does indeed apply both to the whole of this treaty, as exhibiting a new code and system of maritime law, and also to every separate point on which I have hitherto observed: but the application of which to this particular article, of which I have last been speaking, seems to me to lead to consequences of the greatest importance. In every transaction, relating to subjects of this nature, but more especially in those in which we limit by new stipulations the exercise of our ancient rights, it ought to be the object of our particular attention to prevent, by the most explicit declarations, all possibility of converting our special engagements into general rules, applicable alike to all countries. But this point was obviously of peculiar importance at a moment when, as I have already observed, we are about to stand, with respect to so many great commercial states, on the footing of the general law of nations, not modified by any special contract. I know not by what fatality it has happened, that we have now done precisely the reverse of this. We have not even left it as a doubtful question, whether these stipulations shall extend to other countries. We have adopted, in this treaty, the very same clause which was inserted in the conventions of armed neutrality, expressly for the purpose of establishing the principles there promulgated, not only as a rule for all transactions between the contracting parties, but as a universal law, applicable to every civilized state. We have declared, that all the stipulations to which we have now acceded, "shall be regarded as permanent, and shall serve as a constant rule to the contracting powers, in matter of commerce and navigation." If any doubt could arise, as to the true meaning and extent of this declaration, that doubt would be at once removed by a reference to the conventions of 1780 and 1800, from which it has been almost literally transcribed. But, in truth, no other meaning can possibly be given to these words, but that which they have always hitherto been understood to bear; that of obliging the contracting parties to adopt these articles as their general rules of maritime law, to be observed indiscriminately towards all the world, except where they are superseded by the express conditions of any special engagement. No interpretation of less extensive operation could give to this clause a consistent meaning, or a rational object. Every treaty must of necessity bind the contracting parties in their transactions with each other, and it would be utterly absurd to have entered into a special stipulation solely for that purpose. Still more preposterous would it be to have chosen, with this view, the very words which Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, three out of four of the contracting parties, had recently used in so different a sense; and to have attempted to provide a security for Great Britain against the claims of other powers, by adopting an article, which has, for the last twenty years, been understood by her, and by all the rest of the world, as conveying that very meaning, which it was, above all others, her object to exclude.

If, therefore, there were no other reasons than that which is furnished by this single article, this alone would abundantly prove the indispensable necessity of proceeding, by farther negotiation, to explain the ambiguities, and to correct the errors, with which every part of this treaty unfortunately abounds. No man can seriously believe that any equitable proposal on this last point, any more than on those of which I have already spoken, if it were pressed with earnestness by the British government, could meet with real difficulty at Petersburgh. What object can Russia have to limit or to proscribe the exercise of our ancient right of search? Why should she wish to prolong the animosities of the contest, when the passions which produced it have ceased to influence her councils? Will her commercial, or will her landed interests be promoted by undermining the resources of Great Britain? Will her naval strength

Digitized by Google

be augmented by procuring for other nations the liberty of sheltering their illicit commerce, under the safeguard of a neutral convoy? Or is it consistent with the first principles of her policy, to break down the vigour of her natural ally, and to destroy the only hope of future resistance to the overbearing ambition of the French republic? No, my lords, she can have no such desire; and I am confident the noble lords themselves, the framers of this treaty, feel, in that respect, the most complete security. Satisfied by all our conduct, that we wish not by an abuse of victory to impose on her confederates injurious or humiliating conditions, Russia has, on the other hand, no inducement to concur with them in subverting, for the paltry profits of individual speculation, that ancient system of public law, which has for centuries subsisted in Europe: a system venerable for its antiquity, and respectable for its mildness, equity, and justice; but above all things, valuable to every established government, from the certainty and stability of its principles, by which it has fixed invariably the rights and duties of independent states; while the modern spirit of innovation, referring us continually for some more perfect rules of conduct, to the uncertain and visionary theories of the day, has produced a practice governed only by the shifting purposes of temporary convenience.

My lords, I will now detain your lordships no longer: I have faithfully discharged a duty which my country was entitled to demand from me. I should be sorry that my motives were misrepresented; I think they cannot be mistaken. At a moment of unusual difficulty, when we had been left once more to contend alone against an enemy, whose progress at that time threatened, and has now, I fear, destroyed the independence of Europe, we found ourselves suddenly attacked by a host of fresh enemies. Those powers, whose most obvious interest it was to encourage and to animate our resistance against the inordinate aggrandizement of France, adopted a conduct directly opposite. They seized the opportunity with eagerness, as one peculiarly favourable for extorting from us concessions destructive of our naval power; and they endeavoured to unstring the very nerves and sinews of our strength, at the precise moment when its exertions afforded the best hope of safety for themselves. In these circumstances it was the natural determination of a magnanimous and virtuous monarch to maintain, with unshaken constancy, the essential rights of his country, and to meet the difficulties of his situation with a firmness and energy, proportioned both to the magnitude of the public interests which were at stake, and to his own sense of the duty which he owed to his people. The wisdom of parliament, and the spirit of the nation, seconded this generous resolution; and by the blessing of Providence on so just a cause, the skill and enterprise of the British navy were crowned with brilliant and decisive victory.

It remained only that we should profit of our success in a manner corresponding with the principles on which it was obtained; not for the purposes of ambition or aggrandizement, but for those of justice and self-preservation. It was the reasonable expectation, I may add, it was the confident hope of every friend to the British interests, not in this country alone, but throughout all Europe, that we should avail ourselves of so favourable an occasion to establish, on a solid and immutable basis, those ancient rights which we have so long maintained, and for which an invincible necessity had driven us at last to contend in arms. Can it be matter of surprise to your lordships, that any subject of such a sovereign, that any citizen of the British empire, should feel, and should express an earnest and anxious wish, that a transaction so memorable for the dignity of its commencement, and for the glory of its progress, should, in its termination, be at least consistent with the honour and with the safety of his country? The anxiety which I have this day expressed on the subject of this treaty is not of recent date. It was, as must be well known to some of those who hear me, manifested long since, and in the very first moment in which I became acquainted with these stipulations. It is a desire not for public discussion, but for efficient and satisfactory amendment: a wish, not to censure or condemn, but to contribute, by such suggestions as experience or reflexion have produced, to remove the present disgrace, and to avert the future calamity which must otherwise, as I think, inevitably result from the inconsiderate precipitation of this transaction, and from the extreme inaccuracy which has been its natural consequence.

If indeed the discussion of this day had the most remote tendency to a revival

Digitized by Google

of differences and animosities with Russia, I should most unwillingly have entered upon such a field. No event could, in my opinion, be more injurious to the only hope which can now remain of safety, either to this country or to Europe. By disunion in war, every effort has failed which has been made for self-defence by the continental powers. By distrust and jealousy in peace, all chance would be destroyed of possible resistance to the fresh encroachments which every day continues to produce. Yet even if this great evil were to be apprehended from this inquiry, the immediate and pressing importance of the object of this treaty might not improperly outweigh, in the minds of your lordships, all considerations of remote or contingent policy. Conciliation is indeed desirable; it is so always; and it is now indispensably necessary, as our last resource against certain and imminent danger. But to conciliate, by the surrender of just rights and of essential interests, to purchase present ease by the sacrifice of future strength, is a system which all experience, and all history have condemned; a system not less impolitic and ruinous in its effects than it is weak and disgraceful in its principle. But in the present case, one sentiment alone can prevail both in Great Britain and in Russia. The desire of every friend of peace, and every lover of justice, throughout the world, must be the same. All must concur in wishing that a precise and unequivocal arrangement on all the matters to which this treaty has relation, may confirm and strengthen the dispositions of friendship, between those to whom Europe still looks for its preservation, and may stifle the seeds of every possible difference which could either interrupt their present harmony, or embarrass their future exertions. By loose and uncertain stipulations on these important concerns, no interest is promoted, no right is asserted, no principle is finally established. From abiguity and doubt, confusion and discord only can arise.

My lords, unless my judgment be blinded by my wishes, a moment more propitious than the present can never be expected, for such explanations as may still render this transaction adequate to the magnitude of the occasion, and to the importance of the interests concerned. The hope of convincing those with whom it rests, that this attempt must of necessity be made, and the earnest desire of contributing, by these suggestions, to its ultimate success, as they have been the only inducement to myself, so I am confident they will be the best excuse which I can offer to your lordships, for the trouble which I have now presumed to give you.

The *Lord Chancellor* began by observing, that in the opinion which he meant to give on the present subject, he must request their lordships to be on their guard against what he should say, as he had been a party to the present transaction; had given his advice as to its adoption, and therefore must be interested in supporting it. He must tell the noble lord, that the words of the treaty did not bear the interpretation which he put upon them. The rights for which this country contended were now completely admitted; and what stamped an inestimable value on the present treaty, and made it the most valuable ever entered into, was, that even the violation of it on our part could not be resisted by violence on the part of the neutrals, but the matter was to be peaceably settled before the competent tribunals of the country. Having been personally called upon by the noble lord to say, whether, in his judicial character, leaving out all idea of his political functions, he would give to the article respecting the carriage of the colonial produce of an enemy by a neutral ship, the construction of the noble lord, he must say, that the call was not quite consistent with the noble lord's usual circumspection; since he must recollect that he might feel himself personally responsible for the construction, as having assisted in forming the paper, and that therefore he could not totally divest himself of his political character; but if it were possible for him to do so, he would not hesitate to say, that he should not agree with the noble lord in the construction that he had put upon the clause. More he could not say, as perhaps in the final adjustment of this and other points with the Northern powers some modification might take place. The learned lord went through the several points of the treaty, and contended, that the settlement had been made on a liberal basis, which showed to the world that Great Britain was not intolerant in her power, and that she did not wish to stand upon trivial points and nice distinctions. The nation had gained the great objects for which they contended, viz. that free

Digitized by Google

bottoms did not make free goods; that ships of war had the right of search; that the blockade of ports should be recognised as legitimate; that the exercise of these rights should be regulated upon clear, intelligible, and liberal rules; and, what was of more consequence than all, that any casual violation of them should not be a cause of quarrel, but should be the subject of amicable adjustment. These were the heads of the treaty, and as to slight objections, from the wording of particular clauses, he must think that they were not to interpret this paper as they would an indictment. When the noble lord said that he objected to particular expressions because they were taken from the convention of the neutral powers, with some variation, he must answer, that he liked them the better for being so taken. The variation showed that we did not recognise the doctrine as there assumed. Thus, in regard to the words, "free navigation to the ports and upon the coasts," it was manifest that we did not mean that they should enjoy free navigation to and from the ports of an enemy. And in the same way, the "or" in the article recognising the right of blockading ports, was all that we could desire, since it established the doctrine, that if our squadron was stationary off a port, or sufficiently near to make an evident danger of entering, such port was to be considered in a state of blockade. The introductory part of the treaty was like the preamble of a bill—it explained the necessity for the act, and showed the spirit in which it was made. In the first place, the neutral power could not set up any such pretension as that of carrying on the coasting trade in time of war. The words of the treaty were "that the neutral ships should be at liberty to navigate from the ports and the coasts of the nations at war;" and the clear understanding between the parties on this point was, that when a Russian ship should happen to take in a cargo, part of which was to be delivered at one port in the enemy's country, and part in another port, such ship should be at liberty to put in at the several ports where she was to deliver the several parts of her cargo. But if at any of those places it should appear that she took in any part of the enemy's property, for the purpose of conveying it to other ports, if, in short, she should attempt to carry on a coasting trade for the enemy, then the cargo would be liable to search and confiscation. He desired noble lords to look at some of the late treaties entered into between this country and France, and there they would find the same principle laid down. No doubt, therefore, could exist as to the clear understanding between the parties on this subject; and the sense of it must be explained by the official documents that existed between both countries. The next point alluded to by the noble lord was, that of stating that the neutral power could by the treaty carry on the colonial trade of the enemy. Were he to decide judicially on this part of the treaty, he would put a construction upon it very different from that of the noble lord. He would just ask, whether, if it had been intended to give up a right of such essential value as the one in question, some notice would not have been taken of it in the treaty? He had no doubt but the clear understanding was, that the right should not be given up; and a farther explanation might still be had on the subject. During the late war, the persons who at one time governed France had maintained a monstrous and unjust proposition, which showed how far the country at that time departed from those usages which before had been sacredly observed by nations. They pretended they had a right to confiscate all the goods belonging to neutral countries, because they had been originally the produce of Great Britain; and the only pretence they had for doing so was, that of their being British property. The principle acted upon in the present treaty was quite different. The words declared, "that this country would not consider as enemy's property such goods as having formerly belonged to the enemy, had since been acquired by neutral nations." It was impossible therefore to suppose, that because we were not to prevent neutral nations from acquiring the colonial produce of the enemy, we were to enable them to carry on their colonial trade. On the subject of contraband trade, the feelings of the noble lord had led him to put an interpretation on the words of the treaty which they did not bear. If any other treaty had been examined with the same acumen and the same exactness, it would be found liable to objections still more numerous than were now urged. In putting a construction on a treaty, the intention of the parties must be looked to; and that formed the true interpretation of it. The noble lord had observed, that this treaty would be laying the foundation for a con-

Digitized by Google

traband trade, which all other neutral nations would think they had a right to carry on. But the noble lord ought to have known that this was only a specific treaty with one nation, which could not bind any other power, and had nothing to do with any treaty that might be entered into with Denmark or Sweden; and which could never hereafter give either Holland or America the right of carrying on a contraband trade. The treaty was confined to Russia alone; and we had no quarrel, nor were we at war with Russia. There was here a complete renunciation of the coasting trade: there was a clear, unequivocal admission of the right of search; and he would ask, on the whole, if the country had not established the right for which she had contended? With regard to the right of search, he must say, he wished he could see that right exercised by privateers as well as by king's ships, as these vessels formed a great part of the naval power of the country; and rejecting that false philanthropy by which the practice of privateering had been condemned in France, he would regard it as most essential to the interests of this country. As, however, the right of search by privateers might be resisted, and could not be exercised in some instances without a declaration of war on one side or the other, he thought it better to give it up altogether. The objection made by the noble lord as to the right of search on the part of Great Britain, applied not to the right itself, but to an undue detention after the search was made. The captain of the belligerent power would have the right to go on board the ship that guarded the convoy. If, then, he had no motive for suspicion, he might go away without making any search. But if he had a sufficient motive, he was not bound to declare what it was, but might proceed to his search. If, after the search, it appeared that there had been no justifiable motive for detention of the vessel, then he was responsible to no power for what he had done except his own country. He contended, that notwithstanding what the noble lord had said, a search might still be made; and that there would be as little danger of neutral vessels containing contraband goods now as formerly. From the nature of the thing itself, the ground of suspicion must depend on the discretion of the officer; and he was to determine from other circumstances, besides the examinations of papers, whether he had not a good cause to make a search. Upon the whole, therefore, it appeared to him that the question in the present case was, whether any treaty could be less objectionable than the present? He was convinced in his own mind that it was a treaty of considerable merit, and tended to secure to this country some of her best and most essential interests.

Lord *Holland* said, he certainly should vote for the address, but not upon any of the reasons assigned by the mover and seconder. He agreed with a great deal of what had fallen from the noble lord, who had so accurately divided the rights claimed by this country as her undoubted maritime rights, under five distinct heads. He owned that he did not consider those rights entitled to all the stress and importance which the noble lord had imputed to them; at least, he must strongly object to the manner and the moment in which they had been insisted upon, as he did not think it was any justification of the late war with the Northern powers on our part, to allege that we went to war merely to insist on some of the principles comprehended in those rights. The late ministers, he thought, had much to answer for, in having idly wasted the blood and treasure of the country in a war with the Northern powers, merely to maintain a speculative point. At the same time he declared, that the learned lord on the woolsack had not satisfied him that those rights had been effectually secured by the present convention. With regard to the concessions that had been made in the convention, upon the manner of enforcing the observance of those rights, he highly approved of them, and should vote for the address, because he considered these concessions as likely to tend to the conservation of the peace. Having touched cursorily upon each of the five heads stated by lord Grenville, he spoke of the former treaties that existed between Sweden and Denmark and this country, and read several clauses of the two last treaties in respect to what was deemed contraband in those treaties. He read an extract also of a letter from Pensionary De Witt, dated 1654, upon the subject of commerce, and the carrying trade, as they were affected by them. After reasoning shortly upon these points, his lordship said, that upon the whole he approved of the convention, and thought it held out enough to bear out the assertion in the

Digitized by Google

latter part of the address; but that he still thought, that further explanations of the articles of the convention were necessary.

Lord *Mulgrave* said, he approved of the address, but could not agree in the ground his learned friend had taken to defend all the articles of the convention, and to exult over it as the most advantageous convention that this country had ever made. He said, it often happened, in the joy of the moment, on a sudden obtainment of peace, after an expensive and bloody war, that through inadvertency omissions escaped unobserved in a treaty, that led to future altercation and war. Thus he could, he thought, trace the commencement of the armed neutrality of 1780 so far back as a century and a half ago. At the end of the war in the middle of the seventeenth century, in a treaty with Holland, an unguarded relaxation of our maritime right gave the Dutch the power of carrying the goods of belligerent powers under their flag, both coastwise and from the French colonies to France, and that continued for a considerable time. Upon that very point it was that the armed neutrality of 1780 was founded; and he feared that, through not expressly prohibiting the carrying of naval stores, as contraband of war in the present convention, it might hereafter be taken an undue advantage of by neutral powers during some future war. He however regarded the convention as having secured several of our essential maritime rights. It put an end to the principle, that free ships made free goods; it established the right of search, and it ascertained that a cruising fleet destined to blockade a port was a blockade. With regard to the restricting the right of search of ships under convoy of a neutral flag to our ships of war, and not suffering such right of search to be exercised by privateers, he highly approved of that prohibition. Privateers in all former wars, had been in some instances guilty of cruelty, of plunder, and of various abuses of the right of search: whereas, in the last war, he defied any man to state an instance in which the officers of the navy had not acted in the exercise of the right of search with great caution. He said, it was clear that privateers had at an early period abused their powers, since in the middle of the seventeenth century they were compelled to give security for their good conduct in a bond of 1,500*l.* if they carried 300 men, and in a bond of 3,000*l.* if they carried a greater number of hands. He entertained great doubts, whether it would not add to our naval strength, and assist commerce during a war, if privateers were abolished altogether. They took men from the navy, encouraged deserters, raised the price of seamen's wages in the merchants service, and checked the ardour of those who would, but for privateers, have entered voluntarily into the navy. He could not agree with his learned friend that this was the best convention this country had ever entered into; yet, as his learned friend was satisfied that the construction was favourable to the rights claimed under the law of nations by this country, he would vote for the address.

Lord *Nelson* rose to say a word or two upon the convention, which he highly approved. It had put an end to the principle endeavoured to be enforced by the armed neutrality in 1780, and by the late combination of the northern powers, that free ships made free goods—a proposition so monstrous in itself, so contrary to the law of nations, and so injurious to the maritime rights of this country, that, if it had been persisted in, we ought not to have concluded the war with those powers while a single man, a single shilling, or even a single drop of blood remained in the country. That abominable proposition was now set at rest, and abandoned by Russia. The rashness and violence of the emperor Paul had formed the confederacy against us to support and enforce that proposition; but the good sense, moderation and temper of his successor, the present emperor, had consented to give it up and renounce it. By the convention, military stores had been stated as the only contraband of war stipulated with Russia to be considered as such, and much had been said in the course of the debate about naval stores, which were not stipulated to be deemed contraband, because Russia had neither produce of naval stores, nor shipping enough to have freighted them for France. He almost wished she had possessed both during the latter years of the war; because, in that case, France would have been enabled to send their fleets out of port, which we should have fought, and the war in all probability would have been much sooner at an end. But, certainly, to allow other neutral countries, and those maritime states, to carry naval stores to the ports of the enemy, might prove highly inju-

Digitized by Google

rious to us, by furnishing those at war with us with the means of strengthening their marine. He approved of the article restricting the right of search of ships under the convoy of a neutral flag ship of war to our navy only during hostilities; and stated what would have been his own conduct if he had met with such convoy, declaring that he should have endeavoured to discharge his duty with all possible civility to the captain of the neutral frigate, should have inspected his papers, and if, from the information of any seaman, he was led to entertain a suspicion that the papers were fraudulent or fabricated, and that the convoy did contain what was contraband or illicit, he should in that case have insisted on a search; and if he found any contraband articles on board, he should have detained such ship or ships.

The Address was then agreed to.

Debate in the Commons on the Convention with Russia.] Nov. 13. On the order of the day being read, for taking into consideration the Convention with Russia, earl Temple wished to know if the accession of the courts of Denmark and Sweden to the treaty had been received? Lord Hawkesbury said, the formal accession of those powers to the treaty had not been received; but that the Danish and Swedish ambassadors had signified the readiness of their respective courts to accede to the convention.

Lord *Francis Osborne* then rose to move an address to his majesty, and prefaced his motion with a few observations, in which he briefly recapitulated the different articles of the convention, and remarked, that the stipulations contained in each were calculated to terminate the dispute in a manner perfectly consistent with the honour and the interests of this country. The relations that we had always maintained with neutral powers were re-established by this treaty, and there was no longer any danger of their becoming the subject of dispute. We were placed on the same footing that we had always stood with respect to Russia, Denmark, and Sweden, and our just maritime rights were amply secured. His lordship concluded by moving, "That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, to return his majesty the thanks of this House for having been graciously pleased to communicate to them the convention entered into by his majesty and the emperor of Russia, to which the kings of Denmark and Sweden have declared their readiness to accede; to express our grateful sense of the happy issue of his majesty's exertions in support of the maritime interests of this kingdom, by which the essential rights for which we have contended are effectually secured, and provision made, that the exercise of them should be attended with as little molestation as possible to the navigation and commerce of the contracting powers."

Mr. *Ryder* concurred most heartily in the sentiments of the Address. The subject was not new to the House, for it was one with respect to which every member was called upon to make up his mind at the end of the last session. The House then gave a just support to our maritime rights, and to the energy at that time displayed by the House and by government, the country was indebted for the advantageous situation in which we were now placed with regard to the neutral powers. To form a proper opinion of the merits of the present treaty, it was necessary to consider what was the nature of the new questions agitated, and the pretensions set up by the confederacy. It was not necessary for him to remind the House of the alarm which the convention of the northern powers created. A new description of blockade was laid down: it was pretended, that neutral flags should make free goods; and that they should bear freely the property of one belligerent power, without being liable to interruption from another. But that which was the most dangerous feature of the whole was, the principle on which that treaty affected to be founded: by this principle it was boldly assumed, that a few states had the right to legislate for the rest of Europe. This pretension, under which the three northern powers wished to reserve to themselves the right of violating treaties that they had formerly entered into with this country, and of protecting the like violations in others, was completely done away by the present treaty. And here he could not help stating his approbation of the conduct that ministers had followed in the negotiations which had terminated this dispute. They had acted with a firmness and moderation which could not be too highly praised. The victory at Copenhagen, and the abandonment of the confederacy by the emperor of Russia, were sufficient proofs of the energy and diplomatic skill of those in whose hands the affairs of the

Digitized by Google

country were trusted. Of their moderation, the treaty on the table afforded the most ample evidence; and when the House had considered it, he was confident they would not like it the worse, that it was entirely confined to the settling of the pretensions set up in the convention of the confederacy, and did not attempt to decide many points which might have been adverted to, but which that convention did not bring into question. Looking at the treaty, he must observe, that it was not to be considered as forming a new law of nations, but as terminating a dispute, by a return to old and established principles. If it should be found that all our just rights were fully maintained by the present treaty, and that every thing essential was secured to us, the House would doubtless testify their approbation of the measure, by unanimously voting for the address. He was also confident that the House would not be the less satisfied with the treaty, if they should find that it gave up any part of claims which were evidently useless, and tended only to irritate other powers. Such a concession he conceived to be consistent with the dignity and moderation which had always characterised the councils of this country. In order to show the advantages of the present treaty, he should briefly contrast its principal stipulations with those of the convention entered into by the three northern powers. The third article, it would be observed, determined what was to be considered a blockaded port; what articles were contraband of war; and it regulated the trade of neutrals on the coasts of belligerent powers. These were three of the most important articles in dispute. The convention of the northern powers in 1800, in stipulating that neutral bottoms, should make free goods, assumed the right of setting aside all the existing treaties of commerce between this country and those powers. But the present convention with Russia brought things back to their former state, and fixed, as contraband of war, those articles which were so considered by the treaty of commerce concluded between the two crowns in 1797. The second article of the convention of 1800, gives a right to the ships of neutral powers to trade freely to and from the ports of powers at war. The convention on the table, however, made an important alteration in that respect. The ports sailed from are omitted, and permission is only given to neutral ships to the ports upon the coasts of the nations at war. They are therefore deprived of the means of carrying on the trade of the enemy, while every opportunity is given them of fairly conducting their own. The third article of the convention of 1800 stipulated, that the effects of neutral states should be freely navigated, and that the neutral flag should be considered complete evidence of the effects being the property of subjects of those powers. This the House would recollect formed the foundation of the armed neutrality of 1780. But this claim was completely renounced by the present treaty. The next article he should notice was that which related to ports in a state of blockade. According to the convention of 1800, it was requisite, in order to constitute a blockaded port, that there should be a line of ships stationed in the front of the harbour, disposed in a manner somewhat similar to the investment of a fort by troops. This article, which was directed against our naval superiority, was completely disclaimed by the present treaty. A blockaded port was now characterized to be that in which the disposition of the ships of the attacking power produce an evident danger of entering. The treaty on the table, however, stipulated no particular mode of investment, nor determined any number of blockading ships. The last article to which he should call the attention of the House was one of great importance. It would be observed, that this article, in the convention of 1800, was carried to an extent far beyond what was given to it by the treaty of 1780, though that was professed to be the basis of the convention. That article stipulated, that the declaration of the officer commanding a neutral squadron should be considered sufficient evidence that there was no contraband merchandize or enemy's property on board his convoy. On the contrary, the corresponding article in the present treaty rendered such a declaration insufficient, and the right of search was preserved to our ships of war, in all cases where there shall appear a just cause to exert it. As it was the object of the right of search to guard against unfair practices of the subjects of neutral powers, no alteration could be admitted with respect to it, and, accordingly, no modification of the principles appeared in the present treaty. It was, indeed, so regulated, as to render the exercise of the right more practicable; but nothing was granted that could tend

Digitized by Google

to diminish our security, or compromise our honour. He trusted, therefore, that the treaty would not only put an end to the dispute at present, but prevent the tranquillity of Europe from being ever again disturbed by it. He congratulated the House and the country, that the advice given by some gentlemen at the close of the last session had not been followed. It was fortunate that administration had neither listened to those who expressed doubts of our rights, nor those who thought that the question ought to be left undecided, as in 1780. He rejoiced that our temporising conduct at that period had not been followed on the present occasion. It was to that unfortunate disposition that the late pretensions of the neutral powers were to be ascribed. From every view of the subject that he had taken, it appeared to him impossible that there could be any opposition to the address.

Mr. *Grey* said:—I rejoice, Sir, most sincerely, that the convention has taken place, and I am little disposed to examine its terms critically. The hon. gentleman congratulates the House, that they did not follow the advice of those who expressed doubts of our rights, nor of those who thought they had too much sense to doubt of those rights. Yet thought that the question should not be tried. I am sure, Sir, that on the present occasion I have no reason to regret the opinion I then gave; and if the House compared what might have been lost by the convention, with what has been gained by it, they will not find much reason to rejoice that my advice was not followed. I must, however again state, that I most sincerely rejoice in the present convention; for, had it not been concluded, I am convinced that we should have had no peace with the French republic. I consider it merely in the light of a judicious compromise; for I cannot agree that the dispute is settled. We are called upon to thank his majesty for concluding this treaty with Russia, but there is no absolute certainty that Denmark and Sweden are willing to accede to it. Notwithstanding what has been said, I do not think this convention has done away all possibility of dispute. The noble lord who moved the address, and the hon. gentleman who seconded him, adopted a singular method of proving their assertions in this respect. They went over each article of the treaty; and said, this has left us just as we were; that just places things as they were before. Now it appears to me rather a singular mode of putting an end to a dispute, to leave it just as it was found. It reminds me of a dying gentleman, who, when making his will, remarked that he was leaving a fine occasion for a law-suit. But it is supposed that no dispute may arise upon the construction of this treaty with Denmark and Sweden. The latter country never considered naval stores to be contraband of war, in consequence of the treaty with this country; and I have no hesitation in stating it as my opinion, that, upon the fair construction of that treaty, naval stores are not contraband. As a proof that the court of Sweden considers that treaty in the same light, they expressly claimed the right of carrying naval stores under it. With respect to the question of free bottoms making free goods, I shall not examine whether more is not lost than gained on that point. The hon. gentleman seems to think that we have gained a great deal by the definition of a blockaded port. I should rather be inclined to believe that we had adopted the definition of the neutral powers, than insisted upon one of our own. This description of a blockade is certainly by no means that which we insisted upon in the course of the war, when the coast of Holland was blockaded by ships lying in Yarmouth roads. I am as little inclined to agree with the hon. gentleman in his opinion respecting the coasting trade. The leaving out the words, "from port to port," is of no great importance. It appears that though neutral ships may not carry the property of the enemy from port to port, they may carry it when it becomes their own by purchase. How is this purchase to be ascertained? With regard to naval stores, the case is not better than before. The French, it is true, cannot bring naval stores from Petersburgh; but the subjects of neutral powers may ship them on their own account, and send them to France. As to the right of search, I approve very much of the regulations which the treaty contains with respect to it. It is proper that those causes of irritation, of which neutral powers had so much reason to complain, should be completely done away.

Earl *Temple* said, it would be in the recollection of the House, that there were five points in dispute with the neutral powers. The first related to the colonial and coasting trade; the second, to the right of search; the third, the blockade of

Digitized by Google

an enemy's port; the fourth, whether free ships made free goods; and the fifth, what constitutes contraband of war. In spite of the ingenious speeches that had been made, he could not consider either of these points to be settled by the present convention. The coasting trade he conceived to be completely given up to the neutral powers—the right of blockade so modified as to be of very little advantage—the right of search by no means secured. He approved, however, of that stipulation which took it from privateers; for he was so much an enemy to that species of warfare, that he was glad to see any measure adopted for discouraging it. The examination of papers could not afford sufficient evidence of the property on board neutral ships. It was very easy for these ships to be provided with papers which might appear perfectly fair and regular; and yet if an officer commanding one of his majesty's squadrons found them so, his hands were tied up, and he could not proceed to search a neutral convoy. The character of a blockaded port, as given in the convention, must render all attempts to blockade an enemy's port completely abortive. If our squadrons were driven off a coast by a squall of wind, though still within sight of it, neutral vessels would be at liberty to enter. The specification of articles contraband of war he regarded as improper, in omitting many naval stores which it had always been the policy of this country to regard as contraband. He was not one of those who had doubts with respect to our maritime rights. He wished the question to be decided, but hoped for a decision of a different nature. His opinion was conformable to that of an hon. gentleman whom he was sorry not to see in his place, and who declared that those rights ought only to be abandoned with our existence. The House would recollect that he had compared them to the national flag, which ought to be nailed to the mast, and with which we ought to sink or swim. Alas! that flag was now struck! Notwithstanding the objections he had to the convention, he should not oppose the address.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that from the turn the debate had taken, he should not find it necessary to trouble the House at any length; he should not do his duty, however, if he did not shortly state the grounds on which he differed from the hon. gentleman and from the noble lord, and on which he considered that the treaty deserved a vote of approbation. The hon. gentleman had thought it irregular not to wait till information had been officially received of the accession of Denmark and Sweden. That they were ready to accede did not rest only upon his (the noble secretary's) authority. This had been expressly declared by his majesty in his speech from the throne. Besides the House was called upon now to consider merely the convention with Russia, and if there should be any thing objectionable in the treaty concluded with Denmark and Sweden, there would still be room for censure and condemnation. After repeating the assertions of the two last speakers, the noble lord denied that this was a compromise, as stated by the hon. gentleman, or that we had given up what we had been contending for, as stated by the noble lord. We had maintained in full force our maritime rights, as far as it was our interest, and even as far as it ought to be our desire. We had gained all we were entitled to demand, and all it was our wish to procure. The treaty was at once just and expedient, equitable and wise. Some asked, what did the treaty give us which we had not before? We had not entered the contest to expect any new advantage, but to preserve our ancient and incontestible rights; if these were preserved, the object of our endeavours had been fully attained. The hon. gentleman, in complaining that we stood exactly where we were before we engaged in the struggle, did not take a just view of the state of the question. The powers of the North had confederated to dictate a new code of maritime law to Europe. We went to war to dissolve this confederacy, and to defeat its purposes. What the House therefore had now to determine was, whether this confederacy had been dissolved, and whether we had asserted our ancient rights. The importance of these rights it was unnecessary for him now to dwell upon. There was not, he believed, a man in the country who would not allow that it could not be over-stated. There was one point of view, however, in which he thought it had not been sufficiently considered. To her maritime greatness this country owed her happy issue from the late awful struggle in which she was engaged, and to the maritime greatness of England the continent of Europe owed whatever it retained of independence. This power had reached

Digitized by Google

its present stupendous pitch from a system of policy begun in the earliest times of our history, and brought to perfection in the time of the commonwealth by the enactment of the navigation laws. The principle then established was, to limit the commerce of Great Britain to her navigation, wherever the two clashed to prefer navigation and to sacrifice commerce. The trade of Britain was thus all confined to British ships, and this regulation was extended even to the time of war, with one single qualification, that a larger proportion of foreign seamen was then allowed. The consequence of those salutary laws was, that, upon the principles laid down by the confederacy, we had nothing to gain, but every thing to lose. We allowed no neutral navigation, and the more it was freed from restrictions, we suffered the more. France, on the other hand, had long found her navigation too small for her commerce. In peace she merely laid a small tonnage upon foreign shipping entering her ports, and in time of war she gave it every possible encouragement. Her system then was, to throw her commerce into the hands of neutrals, that she might add to the strength of her military marine. Thus the principles we contended for were not only abstractedly right, as between all countries, but of the most essential consequence to us in our individual circumstances. Yet, he would fairly allow, that he thought we should make the exercise of these rights as little vexatious as possible. It was wise not to push them too far; by seeming to recede, we might prop them more effectually. He had read almost every thing that had been written in defence of the claims of neutrals, and he had never found any reasoning to show that they had right upon their side. However, one strong argument was drawn from convenience. It was said that our principle, though just, was liable to abuse, and that theirs, though erroneous, might, in practice, be found less inconvenient. With a view to the preservation of our privileges (a thing he considered of the first importance) that foundation on which this argument against them rests should be for ever taken away. His lordship then made some observations, and quoted a passage from the treaty itself to prove that it was by no means meant as a new code of maritime law, but merely as a settlement of certain differences that had arisen between this country and three powers in the north of Europe. He went on to say that, in his view of the subject, there were in dispute four essential points, and one or two collateral: 1st, the right to seize enemy's property in neutral ships; 2nd, the affair of contraband; 3rd, the right to search vessels under convoy; and 4th, the right of blockade. A fifth and sixth might be considered, the colonial and coasting trade, or they might be considered together, and called a fifth. Of these we had gained all that were essential, and our concessions in the others would be attended with no disadvantage. The maxim of "free bottoms free goods," was abandoned in the most unqualified manner, and enemies' property was declared seizable wherever it was to be found. Those who were dissatisfied because there was no new regulation with regard to contraband of war, ought to recollect that it was not our object to annul existing treaties. Even the armed neutrality had only made an enumeration of articles which was to apply to nations between whom no treaty existed. This treaty was not general, and by no means established the point that naval stores should not be reckoned contraband between others than the contracting parties. The advantage of the concession to Russia was as trifling. In the course of a season she did not send twelve ships without the Sound. He declared himself to be of opinion that, by our treaty with Sweden, naval stores were to be considered as contraband. All contraband was expressly excluded, and the list in which naval stores did not appear, was introduced by an *ac specialiter*. The right of search, he considered the most important of all; without it, the recognition of all the rest was of little value. Here a concession had been made, but he was free to declare that it had been voluntarily offered by the British government, on condition that the northern powers would recede from their inadmissible pretensions. He did not, however, join in the vulgar clamour against privateering, and it would be found that privateers would suffer very little by this abridgment of their rights, as the regulation extended only to ships under convoy. The noble lord who spoke last, in what he said concerning the manner of searching, had fallen into a great error concerning the law of nations. Where there was no ground of suspicion, there was no right to search, and the captain exercised this right always at his own risk. That there

Digitized by Google

was nothing new in the language used in this convention, he proved, from the treaties with Denmark and Sweden, concluded in the middle of the seventeenth century. It was only just ground of suspicion that authorised the searching of single ships, and with regard to ships under convoy, we had always the additional security of knowing when they were assembling, of being able to form conjectures as to their cargo and destination, and of having it in our power to watch them during the whole course of their voyage. It had been asked, who was to be the judge of the suspicion? *Ex vi termini*, he who feels it. Gentlemen were apt to confound suspicion and proof. The same course would now be pursued with convoys as formerly with single ships. The words had existed above a century and a half, and in their interpretation would not now undergo any change. The present definition of blockade went as far as any esteemed writer on the law of nations had ever extended it. Upon this point, opinions had been in the extreme. While some contended that the power possessing a naval superiority has a right to declare any port whatever in a state of blockade, without sending a ship of war near it; others were of opinion, that a port ceased to be in a state of blockade, as soon as the blockading fleet, from whatever cause, left it open to neutral navigation. This treaty held a due medium between these two opposite doctrines. Considering that the liability of a blockading fleet to be blown off the port by stormy weather, constitutes the only difference between a blockade by sea and a blockade by land, the treaty declared that a port should then be considered in a state of blockade when there was a fleet assigned to blockade it. Thus these four most essential points, which had all been disputed, were all abandoned to us. We have a right to seize enemies' property wherever met with on the seas; we have a right to consider every thing as contraband of war with which our enemies could be supplied to our annoyance; we have a right to search both individual ships and fleets under convoy wherever there is the least ground of suspicion; we have a right to blockade, not only with stationary, but with cruising squadrons, and all these are publicly acknowledged by those powers whose interest it is to dispute them.—The remaining points he considered as collateral, and for this reason, that the four former depend upon the law of nations, but the colonial and coasting trade are not to be considered *per se*, but to be regulated by particular treaties. If a nation allowed another to trade to its colonies in time of peace, there was no doubt that its colonial trade might be carried on by that nation in time of war. Those who said we had here granted neutrals all they demanded, he referred to the treaty of armed neutrality itself. It was there said, they should be at liberty to sail from port to port on the coast of the belligerent, but in this convention the words were "sail to the ports and on the coast." Was nothing intended by this alteration? He denied that neutrals would be at liberty, under these words, to commence a voyage from the ports of a power at war. The coasting trade was illegal in time of war, only because it was prohibited in time of peace. He was told that Holland laid no restrictions upon this trade whatever; therefore in her case we could not suffer by this article, whatever construction was put upon it. The colony trade he considered to be in no way affected by these regulations, but to remain on its ancient footing. It never entered into the consideration of the armed neutrality; and this treaty merely settled the disputes occasioned by their unwarrantable claims. However, as some doubts had arisen, and as it was most desirable that every ground of future disagreement should be obviated, an explanation upon this point had been requested from the court of Russia. It was not in his power officially to state the result of this explanation, but this he could state, that when produced it would be found highly satisfactory. The colony trade was expresly disallowed, with this trifling qualification, that whatever relaxation had been made during this war, should be continued in future to the contracting powers.—No ship was now to be considered to belong to that power whose flag it bore, unless the captain and one-half of the mariners were natives of the country. Those who knew how neutral colours had been abused in the two last wars, would not consider this regulation of small importance to us. It was said that the treaty was ambiguous; but what treaty was ever framed which did not leave room for the cavelling of the discontented? As to the question, whether more could have been gained, he trusted that ministers would receive credit

Digitized by Google

for having used their utmost endeavours to promote the interests of their country. But in this case, if no more was gained, it was because no more was wished. The treaty did enough; it contained an ample recognition of all that was essential to us as the first maritime power on the globe. He knew there were some who saw no policy but in violence. For his part, if he could obtain what he considered substantial justice, he not only would let off his enemy without blows, but would help him to escape. We had gained by this treaty all that justice, all that policy required; and he did not see where would have been the dignity in pressing severely upon states, because, when compared with us, they were weak and feeble. A petty concession was not to be compared with the rancour and ill-will produced in extorting it. When the northern powers were confederated against us, and threatened to enforce their pretensions with the sword, we showed true magnanimity in using force to chastise their temerity; but we showed equal magnanimity in seizing upon the first symptoms of returning moderation to bring about an amicable arrangement. We thus proved that we would neither recede from our rights, nor push the exercise of them beyond the bounds of reason and justice. On these principles the treaty was founded, and on these principles he asked for it the approbation of the House.

Dr. *Laurence* said, it was argued, that we had established the right of preventing free ships from making free goods; yet that right had been previously acknowledged, and it was matter of fact, that the northern powers never seriously wished to contend with us for it. They had merely set up a plea against it, with a view of converting their opposition to advantage in other points. They had contended against our right in that instance, with a view of withdrawing their pretensions, in order to induce us to make concessions of importance in other respects. As to the right of search, it had never been disputed, when the circumstances of public affairs rendered the attempts of the northern powers more likely to succeed; when our ships were doubled in number by those of the enemy, and when our fleet was driven up the Channel by a very superior force. Yet, placed as the country was, in that alarming situation, no attempt had been made to deprive us of the right of search. When he considered the article respecting the contraband trade in time of war, it did not appear to him, that any thing of moment had been gained by the convention. Whatever might be the terms in which the act of accession on the part of Denmark and Sweden might be notified, he trusted that the policy of this country would not treat the weak powers with severity. In considering the definition given by the learned gentleman, of the state of the blockade, he could not help observing, that it was rather a dangerous experiment. It had been changed six or seven different times. At one time, to constitute a state of blockade, it was necessary that the ships should be stationary; at another, it was required that they should be sufficiently near to the port to render the approach to it dangerous. Blockades could not be justly defined; for there was no certain standard, no precise rule, no traces of them in the admiralty laws. They had been indeed assimilated to sieges by land. Whenever the declaration of a state of blockade was announced, all vessels which endeavoured to enter the harbour, became from that moment liable to be seized; yet if the blockade was not actually kept up, that circumstance would give rise to strange contradictions in the jurisdiction of the country. He should also remark, that no specific time was settled, with regard to the determination of the blockade. A case in point had fallen within his own knowledge. On the 18th of April, the squadron which kept a port in a state of blockade, sailed from its situation, and on the 19th, after twenty-four hours sail from the place, the vessel to which he alluded was taken, and treated as if the port had been in actual blockade; yet who could undertake to say, that there existed at that moment evident danger in attempting to enter the harbour? No man would venture to assert, that such a case fell within the definition given by the learned gentleman. The right of convoy was consequently a consideration of the highest importance, and should never be enforced but in cases of great necessity. The treaty was, in that respect, drawn up with as much care as could be well expected; yet there might be a discretion in government to go farther. Under every impression of the treaty, he insisted that he would not have built it upon the basis of the armed neutrality; he would not have constructed this vessel upon that keel. Instead of weakening the power and influence of

Digitized by Google

Russia, it tended to increase and strengthen them; for the emperor of Russia was left to negotiate for the two other states. It was full of discord, and liable to much difference of explanation. Having commented upon the policy of giving up to Russia some settlement in the Mediterranean, he concluded with observing, that he could not tamely think of relinquishing all the possessions we had acquired, for a peace which he could not think honourable to this country.

Lord *Glenbervie* said, there were two points upon which he must say a few words. One was with regard to the goods of Russia, in which a difficulty had been introduced by his learned friend which did not belong to the case. The other was a matter of fact, concerning which his learned friend's understanding was incorrect. Upon the matter of fact his learned friend had stated, that the contracting parties of the armed neutrality of 1800, did not really mean to persist in denying the right of search: this was very extraordinary, since they had an express order upon that subject: This was direct evidence of a fact which was at variance with the understanding of his learned friend upon the subject. A Swedish captain had received express orders from his court not to suffer any examination whatever, but to resist it with force. This was the positive order and matter of fact which he had to oppose to the understanding of his learned friend upon this subject. Afterwards the captain became subject to our search: he thought it wise not to resist that search with force, he was brought into this country, but when he went home he was broke for not having resisted the search by force; a tolerable evidence of the intention of his court seriously to dispute the right of search. A Danish ship actually did use force in resisting the search; another proof that his learned friend's understanding upon that subject was at variance with the fact.

Mr. *Sturges* considered the treaty, not as a compromise, but as a complete surrender of every object which we could fairly desire. He hoped it would be lasting, and he had well-grounded reasons for entertaing that hope. They were grounded in the glorious manner in which we had asserted our rights, and the moderation with which our victory had been followed. Northern powers had learnt that the Sound was not impassable, and even if it were rendered impassable, the passage of the Belt would be still open; a passage, the discovery of which was reserved for the consummate skill and daring spirit of the British navy.

Mr. *Erskine* said:—I cannot, Sir, resist the pleasure of expressing the most unqualified approbation of the manner in which this convention has been so happily concluded. I have never been in the House when it was in progress, and only entered it to day when the seconder of the motion was concluding his speech; but though a stranger to your debates upon the subject, I am no stranger to its importance. Not long ago I saw three great nations of the North, one of them powerful indeed, confederated against the most vital interests of our country; yet in so short a time afterwards I now see the same powers pledged to concur with us in their support, by upholding our ancient system of commercial law. The effect of such a successful conspiracy must have been to establish universally, that free bottoms should make free goods; because they who denied the right of search and enforced the refusal, annihilated every regulation against enemies property or contraband of war; since it is only by search that the invasion of the law can be detected. Our situation, nevertheless, as it regarded those confederating nations, was delicate in the extreme; since some of their staple commodities were in times of hostility (unfortunately too frequent) closely connected with the necessities of the state. The merit of this convention is not therefore to be lowered by calling it a judicious compromise. During the American war it was well observed by the late Mr. Burke, whose name the House will always hear with respect that almost every human benefit was founded in compromise and barter, "we give" he said, "and take, choosing rather to be prudent statesmen than subtle disputants."—If we had endeavoured to insist on harsh terms with the powers in question, they would have renewed the contest on the first opportunity that offered; but by our wise moderation the difference has been finally settled; as they have solemnly pledged themselves, in the face of Europe, that no neutral nation shall in time of war protect the property of enemies to belligerent powers, nor furnish them with the materials of war, for this prohibition is sufficiently established by the recognition of the right of search, as the general law of civilized states. We had thus preserved the honour and inter-

Digitized by Google

est of our own country, by not forgetting that other countries have interests and honour also, which they are equally bound to assert. I know that those who speak from this side of the House must be careful how they express themselves, to guard against the misrepresentations of having spoken against ourselves; but I never can forget the good will which we owe to the whole human race, and the more so from the high station in which the Divine Providence has placed us. I agree to the basis of the convention as expressed by the noble secretary of state, which ought indeed to be the principle to govern every settlement of disputes. Whether a controversy be between individuals, or between contending nations, we should always seek to secure, if possible, the interests and reputation of both; because it is the only mode by which, in the end, they can be amicably satisfied. My professional life has often placed me in the character of a mediator, and I have always endeavoured to obtain this object as the only one which led to lasting reconciliation, and I rejoice to see it as the foundation of the arrangement which has been made. Without it, perhaps, we could not have had a peace so likely to continue, and which I verily believe will be lasting if it be pursued as it was made, in the spirit of peace. I wish France and every other nation to see that our divisions are at an end. We have made many sacrifices in the course of the late contest, and we must make many more to redeem our country from the consequences of a war, the continuance of which might have been fatal to it and to the security of the whole civilized world. I hope, Sir, that ministers will now pursue towards their fellow-subjects the same liberal policy which, upon this occasion, they have shown towards adversaries. This is still wanting—I am now looking forwards and confidently maintain that if the people of Great Britain and Ireland were governed according to the spirit of our laws mildly administered, they would, to use again the language of Mr. Burke, for ever cling and grapple to you, and nothing could tear them from their allegiance. Nothing indeed, can estrange them from our invaluable constitution but shutting them out from its benefits. These are my sentiments, and I speak them from the bottom of my heart. To conclude, Sir, to say that I approve of this convention would be to speak more coldly than I feel because I think that ministers are entitled from it to the thanks of their country.

Sir *W. Scott* said, that the learned gentleman, had uttered sentiments of which he entirely approved. It was his intention to have gone through the several heads of the subject, had not that task been performed already with such ability by his noble friend. As to the convention, as far as his understanding went, the essential rights of the country were to be supported by it; and it was, at the same time, perfectly adequate to every fair demand of every neutral country. The surrenders we had made also, he thought, were made with perfect propriety. The right of search had been preserved to us. With respect to privateers, a popular clamour seemed to have been raised against them very undeservedly; for there were points in which the utility of that species of warfare was manifest. He approved, however, of the modification with respect to them in the present convention. Upon the right of search, he took occasion to observe, that it was one to which all the rest were subordinate, for it was one without which all the rest were almost useless; it was therefore one of the pillars of our maritime strength. This was preserved in all its essential vigour by this convention. The subordinate points might be subject to critical observation, but the general character of them was perfectly intelligible. Under these circumstances, he gave his entire approbation to the whole of the convention, as a measure brought about by the valour of our arms, and the wisdom of our councils, and which secured the most important, while it invaded none of the rights of this country.

Mr. *Tierney* said: I rise to express my approbation of the convention. The present ministers, when they came into office, pledged themselves to use their honest endeavours to obtain peace, and to use their power with justice and moderation. They have fulfilled their pledge, and I feel myself bound to give them an honest support. I am sensible of the difficulties under which the country labours, but I see no cause for despair. I think I see a ray of hope, and I trust I shall not be disappointed. I trust that ministers are determined to act upon the only system by which the nation, after its struggles and sacrifices can be restored to its former greatness. With these sentiments, I shall not only give them no opposition, but

Digitized by Google

contribute every exertion of my humble talents to aid them in the work.

The motion was then agreed to.

Debate on Sir W. Pulteney's Motion for a Committee on the Trade between India and Europe.] Nov. 25. Sir *W. Pulteney* rose to make his promised motion. He began by observing that a variety of documents had last session been laid upon the table with regard to the trade between England and India, and his object was, that these should now be fully considered. The grand question which arose out of them was, whether British merchants were to receive such facilities as to enable them to enter into a competition with foreigners in a vast branch of commerce? The question always appeared to him to be of the first magnitude, and it rose upon him in importance the more he considered it. Many objections had been made to the proposed regulations; these he had carefully weighed, and the effect they had taken upon him was, to impress upon his mind a more lively sense of the necessity of calling for the interference of the legislature. In 1793, when the charter of the company was renewed, various clauses were introduced into the act in favour of private trade. From the manœuvres of the directors, however, these were productive of no good effect, and the intentions of the legislature were completely frustrated. From the increased difficulties thus experienced by individual traders, many representations were made, and at last a committee was appointed to take the whole subject fully into consideration. A report was by-and-by published, approving, without qualification, of the conduct of the Directors. By a court of proprietors this report was afterwards confirmed. It was for an account of these proceedings that he had moved last session. It was then too late to discuss them, but he had given notice of his intention to bring the subject before the House as soon as parliament should again be assembled. That notice he had renewed, and it was not his fault that he had been so long in fulfilling his promise. He was told that a compromise was likely to take place, and he thought it right to see whether justice could be done without an act of the legislature. He understood that terms had been offered by the court of Directors, but these were so unreasonable, so inadequate to the end proposed, that he could remain silent no longer.—When the East India company was first established, at the end of the seventeenth century, the object of the legislature was two-fold. 1. By the sale of the monopoly to raise a sum of money, the grant of exclusive privileges in trade being in those days an expedient for filling the treasury, often resorted to by the crown. 2. A second consideration was, that a trade so distant could not be carried on by individuals, but only by a joint-stock company. It was therefore thought that the wants of government might at once be supplied, and a benefit conferred on the commerce of the company. In the reign of queen Anne the monopoly was again sold, and a second company was formed. As they did not go on very well separate, a union between them was effected, and for this reason the present company was styled the "United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies." The monopoly was long preserved with great rigour. It was scarcely possible for individuals to trade by themselves, but every British subject was prohibited under severe penalties from having any concern with a foreign commercial company trading to the East. For a little while our East India company went on very well, but then they were only merchants. Become soon after victors and sovereigns their affairs went to ruin. In fifteen years after their first territorial acquisition, their profits had not only entirely ceased, but their losses were so great, that for a rupee, worth 2*s*, they could get no more than 1*s*. 8*d*. Indeed, this was not at all matter of surprise. The character of traders and sovereigns was inconsistent, and their union had never failed to prove ruinous to the mercantile concerns of these counting-house kings, and to make their unhappy subjects suffer under all the evils of oppression and misrule. On the ground of the complete incapacity of the court of the directors, a bill was brought into parliament in 1783, to take all power and management out of their hands. I opposed this bill because I considered it dangerous and unconstitutional. It went to establish a board with vast authority and influence, independent of the crown, to erect an *imperium in imperio*. After it had passed this House, and had been read twice in the Lords, it was happily thrown out. Another corrective was then resorted to, and a board of commissioners was appointed, which in various ways

Digitized by Google

was to check and control the court of directors. No dispatches were allowed to be sent to any of the presidencies till they had first been communicated to the board, and the commissioners received great power over the territorial revenue and the political concerns of the dominions in India. To interfere with matters of trade they received no power, any farther than to see that the mercantile schemes of the directors did not interfere with the well-being of the Indian empire. Things continued in this situation till 1793, when the charter was to be renewed. Before this, it had been perceived, that the revenues must fail if native industry were not more encouraged. Foreigners were therefore allowed to trade on the same terms with the company themselves. The jealousy of British merchants, however, still remained. Those who had made fortunes in India, having thus no means of remitting them to England, took the benefit of the trade allowed to the French, Danes, Swedes, and Americans. Immense profits were thus made by foreigners; and they, from thus being sure of a cargo home, were enabled to export to India with great advantage, and in many instances to undersell the company. In 1793 the bad policy of this system began to be perceived, and many clauses were introduced to give facility to the private trade. Whoever reads the act must perceive the extreme jealousy which the legislature entertained of the designs of the directors. It was well known, that the directors would use their utmost endeavours to obstruct this trade; but sufficient guards, it was thought, were introduced to protect it in its new immunities. The directors, nevertheless, have obstructed it materially, and, in as far as in them lay, frustrated the intentions of parliament. The governors of India uniformly complained of their conduct, and recommended a more liberal system. Sir John Shore, Mr. Hastings, lord Cornwallis; in short, there is not a single exception. To these remonstrances the directors obstinately refused to listen, and still declared war against private trade, unless it was carried on in a way which prevented all competition with foreigners. In 1798, marquis Wellesley found it absolutely necessary to send home the produce of India in India-built ships. The number that arrived was very great, yet it never once was pretended that the smallest injury had ensued. The directors did not hint even at a bad consequence, but sent express orders that this might never be done again. The next year, therefore, the governor-general refused permission for the sailing of any home-built ship; but the year after he again found it necessary to employ a considerable number. A strong letter was in consequence wrote out to his lordship. By way of compliance with his representations, they propose some advantages to the private trade; but these concessions were insidious, and would have left them at liberty to hamper it at pleasure. I think it is now time to expose their evasions, and to bring the question fairly to issue before a competent tribunal.

The trade of the East India company consists of two branches; that to China, where they are mere merchants; and that to India where, they are sovereigns. The first is a profitable, the second a losing trade. The sales are therefore always confounded. In 1800, they amounted together to above seven millions. Of that there was re-exported 4,700,000*l*., and of the latter sum there was 2,300,000*l*. from private trade, one half of the whole, re-exported. It is allowed, that the foreign trade to India amounts to 1,500,000*l*. I believe it to be a great deal more. Ships, supposed under ballast, have been discovered to be richly laden; and various expedients are used to disguise the amount of it. Of what consequence then, Sir, is the question that we are discussing? To this trade, no bounds can be set: a few years back, Indigo was not known as an article of commerce between the two countries; and, in 1800, we imported Indigo to the value of a million sterling. The importation of cotton and various other commodities has likewise been wonderfully increased; and it is never to be forgotten, that these are raw materials to exercise our own ingenuity and employ our own industry. The advantages to be derived from this trade, are great to a degree, though not yet understood; and shall they all be forfeited from the caprice or illiberality of the directors? We do not seek to deal in one article in which they deal themselves. It is, indeed, strange, that such a question should ever have been stirred. All this art is used to prevent us from coming into competition, not with the company, but with foreigners. They say, you must be under our control, you must employ the ships we send out to

Digitized by Google

you, you must submit to many manifest disadvantages, not for our sake, not for the good of the commonwealth, but lest you should endanger the mercantile gains of France and America.—It is said, however, that the company's sales abroad might be injured. But how can this ever be the case when individual traders never expose the same articles to sale? The company's sales will be injured, to be sure, by thus labouring to enable foreigners to import the same articles with every advantage. But British subjects constitute the only objects of their jealousy. Rather than allow India built ships to come home, they will be at a great expense, and send out ships from England. To pretend that they thus place the private trader on an equally fair footing, is puerile. According to this plan, the cargo must be provided long before; the time of the ship's arrival is uncertain; when she may be allowed to be loaded is uncertain; and it is still more uncertain when she may be dispatched. Every thing is cramped by arbitrary regulations. But India shipping may be had cheaper! Whether cheaper or not appears to me of little consequence—it has so many advantages in other respects. The goods are provided when the ship is ready; they are immediately put on board, and the ship sets sail with them the moment she is fully loaded. Do consider, Sir, what the company propose to do. How can they know what goods are to be sent home? How can they proportion the supply of shipping to the demand? Have they not, to their utmost wish, the power of cramping the speculations of the merchants? Let them consider the danger they run, of losing the trade of India altogether. It is a well known fact, that in 1793 there were sold in L'Orient alone India goods to the value of 1,200,000*l.* sterling. How great is the trade of France alone, then! and how great must be the total of the trade of foreigners, when the extent of the dealings with India are considered of—Lisbon, America, and the states in the north! I am by no means of opinion that foreigners should be excluded. By these means alone the revenues can be kept up. All I ask is, that these advantages should not be granted to foreigners exclusively.

That a proposition so clear should be received like this must indeed confound a stranger. Not only the twenty-four directors who joined in the report were decidedly hostile to the plan proposed: but, upon a change of the direction, they were supported by the six new members who came in, making in all an unanimous body of the thirty persons at the head of affairs. The proprietors approved of the report by a large majority, and a ballot served only to show more unequivocally the ascendancy of the directors. Although there was no secret history in all this, it could by no means be decisive. I have authority to quote against authority. On my side of the question, besides all the governors general for the last twenty years, I have the late president of the board of control. Have these illustrious characters had no opportunity to inquire into the affairs of India? or have they laid down a resolution to overset the company, and to dissolve our empire in the East? I dare say the directors think they are in the right; but I will now show how they come to think themselves in the right. When the company was first established, like the Bank of England, and other joint-stock companies, the directors were chosen by those who held a small sum of stock, and the election was annual. The qualification to vote was then only 500*l.* It was thought that the proprietors interfered too much, and the sum was raised to 1,000*l.* A bill was then brought in to change the annual elections, and it was enacted that six should go out in rotation yearly; so that, when once elected, a member remained in office for four years, and had great facilities given him in naming his successor. The indiscreet interference of the proprietors was prevented, to be sure; but it often happens that, in attempting to mend one evil, you occasion others of equal consequence. It is clear, that ever since the directors have been self-created, there is but one solitary instance of a gentleman being brought into the direction who was not on the house-list. They are now a permanent fixed body, and never talk but of going out or coming in by rotation. The constitution is completely altered; there is now a very powerful, and dangerous aristocracy. How is it supported? I do not blame these gentlemen. The love of power is natural, and no one who has tasted its sweets will willingly descend into a private station. The blame lies with those who allow them to gratify this thirst for domination; and that they are allowed, is indeed much to be regretted. Of all governments, aristocracy is the most tyrannical, oppressive, and odious.

Digitized by Google

I abhor it still more than democracy. I asked how these men kept themselves in power? They have the management of an immense revenue, they have an immense patronage, and ought to have it. I opposed bestowing it on a board of commissioners, and I think it could not be possessed safely by the crown. But this is not all. They have the buying of an immense quantity of goods for India: they have the hiring of vessels to transport them; so that their influence is considerable over the manufacturing, and unbounded over the shipping interest. All who furnish ships' stores they can favour. When a man's ship is taken up, they tell him, you will take your ropes from such a person, your sails from another whom we point out, and your anchors from a third. As a proof of all this, I ask, whether many who hear me have not heard it said, "Oh, he is a great man; he is sure to do well; he has a vote at the India House." The directors do tell the truth when they say that, by the encouragement of private trade, the present constitution of the company would be overturned; and when they state this, they state the true and the sole ground of their opposition. The private traders would get rich, their influence would increase, the dependance of the proprietors on the directors would be greatly diminished, and the aristocracy would tumble to the ground. Here is a very good ground for the opposition of the court of directors; but here is nothing which in any degree affects the question itself.

I have stated the reason which actuates the breasts of the directors; I shall now state the reasons which they assign to others. I shall refer to the report, which was drawn up by a very honourable and upright man. I never did read a paper drawn up with more address, or that showed a greater talent at making the worst appear the better reason. While one reads, all appears right, and we unequivocally approve the conduct of the directors; but the moment we lay down the book, and ask ourselves what arguments have been urged against allowing us the full benefit of our Indian possessions, we are obliged to confess, None, but that you would thus endanger the power of the court of directors: 1. The first ostensible argument is, that if these privileges were granted, British capital would leave the country. But the company themselves are about to raise two millions, and if there is any danger from that sum being exported, it is fully as great when it is exported by the company. Sir, I deny that any danger exists. When capital leaves the country and is lost, it is a bad thing; but if it return with a profit, this is the best way it could be employed. The money sent to India will not be given in presents to the Hindoos. It will be employed in buying raw materials to be brought to England, and will thus encourage industry at home and abroad, and add to the strength of the empire. These gentlemen tell us, this capital might have been employed more profitably. So they think they can judge better of this matter than the owners of this capital. They are to be thanked for their friendly solicitude; but they will probably find that their own affairs will demand all their attention. 2. We have next set before us the terrors of colonization. Upon this point they dwell at great length and with great complacency. But in telling us that the ruin of the country would be the inevitable consequence of any relaxation, they surely forget the nature of the Indian government. At present no one can go to India without the consent of the aristocracy; and when he is there, the aristocracy can put him on board a ship and send him home as soon as they have a mind. Without leave of the government, no one can go beyond a few miles from Calcutta. By a fundamental law, no European is capable of holding lands in any part of the company's possessions. Between India and America no analogy can be drawn, although the separation of that country had been necessary, instead of occasioned by mismanagement. In America the climate resembled that of England, and the constitution of government was almost exactly the same. Above all, America was uninhabited, and boundless tracks of fertile land were presented to the industry of the planter. India is one of the most populous countries on the globe, and every inch of ground is appropriated. The climate is so fatal, that it is almost impossible for a European to remain in it alive a few years; the form of government must be arbitrary, and may be tyrannical. And this is the spot, which, after having become a flourishing colony by draining the mother country of men and money, will at length break off all connexion with us, and become a formidable rival! 3. But great numbers of Lascars would be

Digitized by Google

brought to London, and, being here corrupted, would on their return corrupt their countrymen. They would thus carry a bad report of us to Hindostan, the English character would be degraded, and the English empire in the East shaken to its foundations. All this is really urged with gravity. Would it not be possible to prevent the Lascars from ever entering London; we trade to China, but our men are not allowed an unrestrained intercourse with the Chinese. It would be an easy matter, at a small expense, to superintend the Lascars when on shore; and, though the expense should be considerable, the profits of the trade would be amply able to bear it. It is a curious fact, Sir, that the company are daily in the practice of bringing home Lascars; and if I am rightly informed, those whom they do bring home are allowed to wander about the streets and to die for want, while those brought home by the private traders live on shore in a kind of barracks prepared for them, and are watched over with the greatest care. 4. The shipping interest would suffer. Sir, if I am rightly informed, the shipping interest are by no means adverse to the plan. The price of timber in this country is now so enormous, that there is scarcely any profit to be made by building ships, while there is a great deal to be made by repairing them. If trade increases, and the number of ships entering our ports is increased, they therefore justly think they would ultimately be gainers. 5. An argument still more formidable is, that the British sailors would be injured. In all cases where they are to be found, the merchants are willing to employ British sailors in preference. It is their interest to do so. Seven British sailors are supposed to be equal to twelve lascars; and, though some give a different proportion, all agree in making the difference prodigious. Thus the loss of tonnage, when Lascars are employed, more than counterbalances the cheapness of their wages. The merchants are willing that a clause should be introduced, enacting that, when they are to be found, a part, or the whole of the crew shall be English; and that certificates of the impossibility of finding them shall be given by the court of directors, or the council at the presidencies in India. If this trade is placed under proper regulations, it will afford encouragement to a prodigious number of our mariners, it will greatly increase their number; and, in case of a new war, will add materially to our maritime strength. Upon the commencement of hostilities, Lascars can be employed as substitutes; and, without any interruption to our commerce, an immense number of hands can be given to the navy. This is an advantage not to be derived from the trade to the West Indies, or any other colonial trade on the globe.

The admission of India-built ships cannot be objected to, if it were for no other reason than the present scarcity in this country of timber for the navy. The deficiency begins to be felt to a most alarming degree. But the wood of which these ships are built is preferable to the best oak, and it can be imported for all purposes, free of expense, in the form of a ship. In the opinion of the court of directors, a grand national object like this is to be sacrificed, because it would interfere with selfish views! During the war the trade of foreigners to India has had to struggle with considerable difficulties. Now that peace has arrived, we shall have not only our former rivals, but France and Holland; and there will be few obstacles to their being assisted by British capital, if, through the unhappy influence of a few merchants in Leadenhall-street, it is not allowed to be employed at home. France has all her colonies restored to her. There is no clause in the treaty to say that she shall not trade in the Indian seas. There could be none; and the only way in which we can prevent our commerce being wrested from us, is to free it from every unreasonable restraint. If foreigners are once allowed to get possession of it, we may discover our error only in time to find it irretrievable. Now we may secure to ourselves this inexhaustible fund of wealth; but if we unprecedentedly allow it to slip from us, it is gone for ever. Whenever our commerce is ruined, we shall have no other consolation than that we have preserved the sacred band of thirty directors. It likewise ought never to be forgotten that all that leaves our scale, falls into the scale of France, so that the loss acts doubly against us. I think I have said enough to prove the propriety of my motion. I do not wish the House to come to a decision now. Let the whole business be submitted to a committee, and sifted to the bottom. It will then be seen whether we are not unnecessarily weakening ourselves and aggrandising our

Digitized by Google

enemies; whether we are not doing every thing to discourage manufactures and to cramp trade; whether we are not wantonly shutting up sources of revenue and maritime strength; and whether, if these manœuvres prevail, the sales in Leadenhall-street themselves will not soon be unattended? Sir, I am sure that this subject will force itself on parliament; and that though this motion be rejected, it will not determine the fate of the measure. Sir William concluded by moving, "That a Committee be appointed to take into consideration the Papers laid before this House in the last session of parliament relating to the proceedings of the East India Company, respecting the Trade between India and Europe, referred to in the said Papers, and to report the same, as it shall appear to them, to the House."

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that no member could possibly attach greater importance than he did to the subject now under discussion. He was ready, too, to admit, that the hon. baronet was actuated by the purest and most disinterested sense of duty, while he allowed with pleasure that he had conducted the discussion of a subject so extremely interesting with that candour and good sense which could not fail to have excited universal approbation. The hon. baronet had traced with great accuracy the history of the East India company, from the earliest period of its establishment, down to the present moment. He should first advert to the provisions adopted in 1793, when the House renewed the charter. The private trade had not been publicly acknowledged previous to that period; and it was in 1793, for the first time, that it was formally recognized, and special provisions made for giving new facilities to its extension. At this time, the company were bound to furnish 3,000 tons for the importation of the articles embarked in that trade into this country. This allowance had happily been found to be far from being equal to the purpose in view; but those who had framed this act, foreseeing that such an allowance would be inadequate, had lodged in the hands of commissioners the power of enlarging it to that amount which circumstances should require. The framers of this bill had, in the provisions they adopted, endeavoured to give this private trade all those facilities which might at once be perfectly consistent with the interests of the company, while they afforded every reasonable degree of encouragement to the efforts of private speculation. If the court of directors had not given this trade all the facilities which parliament had intended, a fair ground of parliamentary interference would be opened. Agreeing most cordially with the hon. baronet in the expediency of giving every possible facility to the private trade, he trusted that if, from what had been stated, he should be enabled to draw an opposite conclusion, the House would be disposed to come to a corresponding decision. The hon. gentleman had said, that every governor in India, without exception, was in favour of the private trade conducted on the principles which he had laid down; but whence he had been able to collect this, he was unable to discover. Unquestionably it was true, that his noble friend, marquis Wellesley, had, by the exercise of his discretionary power, and by using extraordinary exertions, employed several ships in 1798 for bringing to Europe the articles connected with the private trade. An order from the court of directors was sent out by the next fleet, prohibiting the importation of any more goods in this way, and, in 1799, the practice was discontinued. Since that time it was renewed; and he had the satisfaction of stating that the court of directors had agreed to shipping for the purposes of the ensuing season. They had even consented, that the shipping employed in the Red Sea should be appropriated to the conveyance of the private trade for 1803. Thus they had not only agreed to confirm the determination of marquis Wellesley, but had expressed their willingness to employ a large proportion of shipping exclusively for the benefit of the private trade, and were even engaged to furnish additional shipping, if the trade of 1803 should require a larger proportion than that which they had assigned. From this statement, therefore, the House would perceive, that the private trader would experience no inconvenience, no loss, no disadvantage whatever, till 1804, even if no new regulations were to be adopted: while sufficient time was allowed to form every regulation which might seem to be demanded by an impartial contemplation of the whole of the circumstances connected with so interesting a subject. The first question was, Whether the court of directors had given those facilities which, by the decision of parliament, they were required

Digitized by Google

to extend to the private trade? He had already stated that they had given the facilities required. The next was, Whether or not there existed a just expectation that these facilities would be extended in future? In directing the attention of the House to these points, he wished that the nature of the trade in question might be fully understood. The capital employed in the trade, it would be recollected, was not drawn from this country, but was a capital composed of the surplus of the salaries enjoyed by the different servants of the company in India. This surplus was either vested in the Treasury of the company, and bills to the amount drawn on England, or it was vested in goods which constituted the trade which the House was at present considering. The amount of the surplus had gradually increased, and the investments in the private trade had experienced a proportional increase. In carrying on this trade, the hon. gentleman had contended, that British subjects were not allowed those advantages which were given to the foreign trader. On examination, however, this assertion would be found to be groundless. To ascertain this, it was only necessary to attend a little to the manner in which the trade was conducted. No persons were, allowed to engage in it who were not licensed by the company's servants; and they were prevented from buying goods formed of the choicest materials, and manufactured in the richest manner. Saltpetre, too, found an exception to the articles which they were permitted in the first instance te purchase. But this exclusion with regard to fine goods referred only to the period prior, to the supply of the ships of the company with these articles. After this supply was obtained, the market was open to the private traders, and the previous exclusion ceased to operate. They might then purchase, not merely the rough part of the goods, but the richest materials, and the most costly manufacture. With the exceptions he had specified, every other branch of manufactures, and every other article of produce, were within the range of their purchase. Such was the situation in which the private traders were placed; and he knew no difference with respect to foreigners, except that it was not necessary for them to be licensed previous to their engaging in the private trade. They enjoyed no other privilege which was not participated by British subjects; and therefore he was at a loss to conceive what those advantages were which the hon. baronet had described to be in the possession of foreigners. But here the hon. baronet had stated an object to be gained by the private trade, and a most important national object it was: an object no less than that of facilitating, by means of ships built in India, the supply of timber for the commercial and royal navy of this country. The hon. baronet had dwelt strongly on this point, and had been extremely anxious to show that there was no other means of so effectually promoting this great object. It was his duty in answer to this, to state, that the court of directors had expressed, in the strongest terms, their anxiety to give every possible facility to any measure calculated for the advantage of the royal navy: they were even willing to engage to use every effort to cheapen the price of timber, by loading particular ships with goods for their own use, so as to reduce the freight to a more moderate rate. The price of ship timber within a few years had increased in a most extraordinary manner, and every plan for effecting a reduction was deserving of serious attention. With respect to the use of ships built in India, for the private trade, this was one of the cases in which the opinions on the subject proceeded to extremes. It was the opinion of his noble friend, the governor-general of India, and of a right hon. gentleman, that ships built in India should only be employed in the trade; and this was the point in which he had the misfortune to differ from them, while the court of directors up to that day, had as strenuously maintained, that the trade should be exclusively confined to British ships. He had now, however, a high degree of pleasure in being enabled to state that the directors had agreed that either British ships, or those built in India, if attended with equal convenience, should be employed; their only objection being with regard to the price. In calculating the comparative expense of British and India built ships, the hon. gentleman had founded his calculations on a state of war; but was it fair to assume, that during a period of peace this expense would not be diminished? It certainly was not; and this was another reason for opposing the motion that time might be allowed to try the experiment for three years. By recommending delay, he trusted that he should not be thought indifferent to the import-

Digitized by Google

ance of the question. The trade was unquestionably of very high consequence. While it opened a channel for the importation of the branches of Indian manufactures, and the articles of Indian produce, which the company had not the means of introducing on their own account; and while it enabled those of the company's servants, who had a certain portion of capital to dispose of, to dispose of in an advantageous manner; it, on the other hand, presented new openings for the commerce, and new encouragements to the manufactures, of the mother country. It was a trade not only attended with great advantages, but accompanied with little risk. It took little capital from the country, yet in its consequences was calculated to make London the emporium of the trade of India. What was said on the consequences which would flow from the employment of Lascars in the navigation of ships coming from India, appeared in his mind extremely inconclusive. That foreign seamen might, without the smallest impropriety, occasionally come in aid of British sailors, could not be denied; but that there was any reasonable fear of the foreigners supplanting the British subjects, was a proposition to which he could not accede. It was impossible to imagine, that, known as the superior skill and intrepidity of British seamen were, their services would be refused for the services of another description of men, whose qualifications were confessedly inferior. On the subject of colonization he was not prepared to agree with the hon. gentleman. He thought it an object of high importance, to prevent an increase of settlements in India, and to discourage every plan which was designed to increase or consolidate such settlements. He admitted, that the cases of America and our settlements in India were not parallel; but at the same time he thought that our experience in America ought at least to have the effect of teaching us caution. On the contemplation of the whole question, he did not think that the hon. gentleman had made out such a case as could be considered by the House as a full and fair ground for instituting an inquiry. He therefore felt it his duty to move the previous question.

Mr. *Johnstone* said, that if there ever had been discovered any disposition on the part of the court of directors to agree to an amicable arrangement of the dispute with the private merchants, the present motion would have been unnecessary. Its object was, merely to put to fair trial the plan which the marquis Wellesley had sanctioned and acted upon. If this plan was to be fairly put to the test for two years, the private merchants would be perfectly satisfied. Was, however, any such disposition apparent on the face of the papers on the table? Certainly not; and hence had originated the necessity for the motion. The right hon. gentleman, when mentioning the subject of the concession offered by the court of directors, did not seem to understand the nature of the concession to be granted. He had thought that the ships in the Red Sea would be amply sufficient for every purpose of the private trade in 1803; but for his part, he could not help being of a different opinion. The House would recollect, that 40,000 ton of shipping had been originally employed in conveying the division of the Indian army up the Red Sea. Of these, 20,000 tons had already returned to different ports in India, and of the other half, a number of ships were disabled, while others were discharged, and would come home in the ensuing season. So that he was afraid, that out of the 20,000 tons, appropriated for the use of the private trade, there would not be a sufficient number of disposeable ships to bring home the property vested in the private trade. There seemed to be a wish among the enemies of the private trade, to represent the plan as altogether new; whereas it was not new, but had been pursued in the several seasons since 1798, when the governor general of India had acted upon it by sending home private property in ships built in the country. After the trial it had undergone, he defied any one to point out a single inconvenience that had arisen from it. It had received the support of every one of the company's servants in India, who had acknowledged the beneficial effects that it was calculated to produce. The right hon. gentleman seemed to think, that the private trade was solely a trade of remittance, and that the capital was made up of the saving of the salaries of the different servants of the company in India. This was, however, an exceedingly erroneous idea of the nature and extent of this important branch of trade. He believed the whole amount of these savings to be a million and a half yearly. Now it was known, that the company had bills drawn on Europe to this amount, and thus the whole of the

Digitized by Google

sum which was to form the capital of the private trade was completely absorbed. The truth was, that the facilities of navigation had opened a variety of new channels; and the East Indies would have to receive, at no remote period, a balance in specie. The private trade, independent of all the concerns of the company, could not now be estimated at less than an annual sum of from four millions and a half to five millions sterling. It had been asked, what were the advantages which foreigners possessed in carrying on this trade, above British subjects? Undoubtedly, if the plan of marquis Wellesley was to be acted upon, and if the private property of British traders was to be sent home in ships of the country, instead of ships sent out by the company, foreigners would possess no advantage. But, on the other hand, if the plan was given up, if the company were to send out ships to bring home private property, and if they were to be allowed to assort and manage the cargoes as heretofore, these checks went certainly to put the British merchant in a far worse situation than that in which the foreigner was placed. On the subject of colonization, he had no hesitation in saying, that he was decidedly hostile to any system which would attempt to colonize our eastern possessions. He would not say how long we could expect to retain our dominions in India; but he was a sanguine man, indeed, who could expect our empire there to continue for 200 years. It appeared to him to be an empire of opinion, chiefly inspired by the awe of our first conquest; and it was our interest not to pursue a plan that might lead the natives to reflect upon their own strength: for which reason, he thought there was no sound policy in having a great many Europeans settled there; but rather that the plan of European settlers should be discouraged, because this must have the effect of teaching the natives, in time, the force of their own natural strength.

Mr. *Wallace* said, that the proposition of the hon. baronet was evidently calculated, through the medium of a committee, purporting to examine merely the claims of private traders, to introduce a discussion relative to every part of our Indian affairs; which should be guarded against at this time, when speculations were indulged respecting the India company, which struck at the root of that establishment. The principle upon which he should vote, in opposition to the proposal, was, that he held it to be a direct attack upon the charter of the India company, without any plea of justice or necessity. The opinion of Mr. Dundas was confidently quoted in this discussion; but, in his judgment, that opinion went to an extent which no reason could be advanced to warrant. He, for one, was not prepared to go so far. From the papers on the table he drew his principal argument against the motion; for it appeared, that the India company could not be found to allow the private trading at all beyond the amount of that settled by the act of 1793, unless it was intended glaringly to entrap their charter. However the motion might be disguised, it would tend to put the spirit of the act of 1793 in opposition to its express letter, and to introduce a question between public faith and public expediency. The principles upon which that act was founded, he stated to be, to procure to the merchandise and manufactures of the British empire exclusively the market of India; and to maintain the influence and power of the company, as interwoven with the power of the country, by securing to them alone the communication between India and Europe. At that time a private trade did exist, under the patronage of the company, but in a crippled state. It was enlarged, and wisely, for many reasons. Among others, from the state of timber in India, and the demand here, it was desirable that India-built ships might be allowed to import it into Great Britain. It was also desirable to prevent the effects of foreign intrigue, and the aggrandisement of foreign power in India. That was the policy which saved India from the machinations of France. Now that, by the treaty of peace, the French establishments were restored, it was more necessary than ever to persevere in that system; for, by giving facility to the trade of India with this country, we should make the foreign factories scarcely worth maintaining. With respect to the danger apprehended from colonization in India, it was the most chimerical that could be imagined. Was it reasonable to entertain any such apprehensions, in a country under the direction of a government so powerful, and supported by an immense army? He showed that the extension of the private trade would be for the advantage of the company, by stating, that in 1798, the percentage profit to the company, on goods

Digitized by Google

belonging to private merchants, was 2*l.* 6*s.* 9*d.*; whereas, in 1800, it amounted to 35*l.* As to the notion, that the report which the Lascars might give in India of their British connexions in Wapping, tending to subvert the British dominions in India, or to reduce the British character, it was too ridiculous to deserve a serious answer. He was not inclined to join with those who supposed that these Lascars would ever be preferred to British seamen, for they were not so cheap. He applauded the disposition manifested by the company to adjust the dispute with the private traders, and hoped the plan proposed for the two ensuing years would serve as the basis of some future arrangement. With these views of the subject, he would give his decided opposition to any proposal endangering the establishment of the company; convinced that its existence, through the medium of a well-regulated monopoly, was essential to the security of the state; and that the transfer of the authority which it possessed to the government, would give it a degree of over-awing power, that would render the existence of the constitution itself extremely precarious.

Sir *F. Baring* said, that the hon. baronet who introduced this question, had called it a commercial one, materially involving the trading rights of this country; but he would beg leave to term it a question in support of the claims of an illegitimate description of traders, against the interest and chartered rights of a legal and legitimate body, whose interests and whose objects must of necessity participate in those of the empire; for, in fact, under the former description only, could he estimate those men in India from whom originated this question: they were children rising against their parents—servants labouring to subvert the interests of their masters—creatures who owed every thing that they possessed to the patronage, protection, and support of that very company whose legal authority and legitimate interest they now sought to subvert, under the pretence of vindicating the commercial rights of British subjects; but in reality with a view to convert this country into a colony, and India into a mother country, and to lay the foundation of future subversion to the institution of the India company, which the legislature of this country had so long cherished and supported, on the fullest conviction of its importance to the prosperity of the British empire. For who, he would ask, were those "reputable" authorities from whom the hon. baronet derived his information on this subject, but the servants of the company in India, and their correspondents in this country, conniving with them to wrest, if possible, all the advantage of India commerce out of the hands of its legal possessors. The hon. baronet had termed the court of directors a court of aristocracy, whose authority was as dangerous to the true interests of the company, as it was to those of this country, in relation to the possession of India. But he begged leave to vindicate the directors from such a charge. Upon the introduction of the act of 1793, for renewing the charter of the company, a principal object avowed by parliament was, the promotion of interest to the manufacturers of Great Britain and Ireland; and on the part of the company, it was earnestly desired that the parties interested would come forward and state what they wished, in order that every reasonable claim might be complied with. The consequence of which was, that a stipulation was brought forward by the right hon. gentleman who introduced that bill, which required that 3,000 tons of shipping should be uptaken by the company for the purpose of carrying the private trade to India, and bringing back produce in return. To this the directors agreed, and even declared their own indifference as to the nation of which such ships should be, whether Irish or English. But if any description of ships was to be proposed, subversive of the principle which was to make the river Thames the medium of reception, or on board of which British seamen were not to be the navigators, the directors were prepared decidedly to reject it. Any departure from this principle would have been injurious to the interests of the British navy. But if this stipulation was not made, the persons in India, from whom the present question originated, would have decidedly rejected British ships, and have preferred their own teak vessels; and instead of confining their commerce to the Thames for promoting the interests of British manufactures, would have made use of them to carry on a trade with all the ports in Europe. Such was the conduct of the servants of the company in India, who have made their fortunes under the protection of the company. But what was the pretence of those persons for employing

Digitized by Google

India-built vessels instead of British? That they could supply Europe with the produce of India upon terms considerably cheaper. But what was the proof on the contrary? Why, that M. Pellier, a French agent, had offered the government in India to pay a price for their commodities on the spot adequate to 10 per cent over and above the investment price, and to convey them to Europe in French bottoms. How, then, could any individual in the private trade pretend that he could supply France with India commodities cheaper than the India company?—With respect to the nature of the homeward India trade, it was, he said, divided under three distinct heads, viz.—1. The foreign trade. 2. The private trade to the river Thames. 3. The company's own trade. By the last returns at the India house, it appeared, that the private trade had increased within the last two years, 300,000*l.*; the foreign in a still greater proportion; but it was uniformly found, that the trade of the company decreased, as that of the private traders advanced; and consequently, their commercial interests were injured, not by foreigners, but by their own servants. The foreign trade, in fact, had increased of late years more than ever; but with this difference, that not a single article of foreign manufacture was consumed in our India settlements, silver only being the article in exchange for the commodities of the country, while British manufactures were the only articles of European consumption, and taken in exchange for the produce brought home to England.—With respect to shipping, he would state the reason why the growth of ship timber in this country was not greater; it was, because there was not a competition sufficient for its encouragement. The navy board held out no adequate inducement for country gentlemen to grow their timber to an extraordinary size; and therefore they cut it down only at that size when, by competition between the navy and the private ship-builders, they were sure of a good price; but he was convinced that the proposed importation of large ships from India, to supply our navy, was to place the English country gentleman in a still worse state than before, with regard to the growth of timber.—With respect to the employment of Lascars in preference to British seamen, such an idea he believed was too ridiculous to require refutation; but with respect to that description of seamen brought to this country by the homeward bound ships from India, the difference was this—the India company alone had provided for them an establishment affording them maintenance and protection, and insured them return to their native country; whereas, it was the interest, and seemingly the object of the private trader, to induce them to desert, and then abandon them to their fate. The directors of the India company acted on the whole of this business, not from any impulse of private interest, but from a sense of public duty: on that ground, they bowed to no man, however high his rank or station, and therefore he could not admit the charge imputed to them by the hon. baronet, of having acted from principles of self interest upon self-elected authority. But the persons from whom the representation of the hon. baronet originated – though they were viewed by the discernment of lord Cornwallis in a just point of view, as individuals, whose private interests were opposed to those of the company, to whom they owed every thing, and as such kept at a distance by that noble lord, were, on the contrary, taken to the arms of marquis Wellesley, favoured by his confidence, and by him supported, in direct opposition to the interests of the company. And what was the conduct of those very men in the last year? Why, that, acting as private traders, their investments being on board private ships, which sailed singly, they reached India long before the company's fleet, which was obliged to await the completion of all their cargoes, and sail in company with convoy; by which means the private ships had not only forestalled the markets there before their arrival, but bought up new freights of country goods for remittance to England, to forestall them there also. Furnished with such privileges as these, the private traders enjoyed greater advantages and indulgence than the company under their charter; for they, in fact, enjoyed all the advantages of trade, without paying any thing for the political expenses of maintaining it. But, not contented with a participation even on such terms, they now made a demand, which, if acceded to, nothing more was left to grant, and a foundation would be thereby laid for the speedy subversion of the company. But, however specious the pretences of those men, with respect to the cheapness of freights on board of India-built ships were, they would be rendered completely nu-

Digitized by Google

gatory by the events of peace. The project was taken up in a period of war, and in the full contemplation of its continuance; and it was consequently followed up for the present. But it would be found, that the consequent abatements in the rate of freightage on board British vessels, the cessation of all risks from war, and the expence of convoy, would so reduce the expences of freight in British bottoms, and still more in other vessels of Europe, as completely to do away every claim of preference to India-built vessels. But, even suppose a preference was still due on account of cheapness to India-built vessels, he begged to know why the India company should be precluded from the advantage, under a charter for which it so dearly paid?—or why a preference should be given to their servants—or, if the spirit of the British Navigation act was to be rigidly maintained in respect to the former, upon what ground of justice or expediency was it to be relaxed in favour of the latter?

Mr. *Metcalf* said, he should confine his observations principally to two points. the first was, the source from which the motion originated. It was from a combination, long, insidiously, and clandestinely carried on by persons in India, who had been the servants of the company, and who owed the means they possessed solely to the protection of that company. These men, aided by accomplices in England, men of no inconsiderable property, and amongst whom were men of no mean talents, had for a long time set up an interest, and for many years past carried on a trade, directly opposed to the interests of their masters; but, not content with availing themselves of the privilege of tonnage, they availed themselves of the flags of foreign nations, and supplied all the countries of Europe with the produce of India, to the great injury of the company; and to such a pitch was this clandestine trade carried, that at one time they actually had 50,000 tons of shipping at Calcutta, under foreign flags, ready to carry their commodities to every port in Europe, and their settlements elsewhere; but the spirited conduct of the governor of St. Helena soon checked their progress, by seizing several of those ships, and sending them for the investigation of a court of admiralty, many of which were condemned as lawful prizes. Having thus lost their interest in the conveyance by neutral bottoms, they now came forward with a proposition, of carrying on their trade with England in their own teak ships, and they had found means to interest in their cause, several men of respectability. The object of the hon. baronet was, to convey home from India the surplus produce purchased by the fortunes of the company's servants; but the mode he proposed aimed at nothing less than the opening of the privileges of the charter to those private traders who were the objects of his advocacy; the consequence of which which would be, that memorials would come from every community of traders in Great Britain and Ireland to participate in the privilege. The legislature had pledged its faith to the company and to the country; and he trusted that that faith would not now be violated, without the fullest proof of its justice and necessity. If the charters of the India company were to be violated, where was the security for those of the Bank of England, of the city of London, or the many other great charters with which the liberty, prosperity, and security of the nation were so materially connected?

Mr. *W. Dundas* was unwilling to violate the chartered rights of the company, but when that company had avowed their willingness to concede in favour of private trade, he felt it his duty to close with them. An hon. baronet had said, that 3,000 tons of shipping was sufficient for the conveyance of the private trade between England and India; but he would ask how this could possibly answer for a trade so very much increased since the settlement of this regulation? The hon. baronet had also asserted, that such was the state of opposition between the private traders and the company's interest, or the home trade with India, that, in proportion as the former increased, the latter always decreased. Unfortunately for this assertion, in 1794-5 the sales of the India company amounted to 5,521,000*l.*; the private sales to 1,053,000*l.* From this period they continued in progressive increase till the year 1801-2, when the company's sales were, 7,600,000*l.*; the private sales 2,382,000*l.*, a proof this, of the rapid increase in both.

Mr. *Jones* denied that the motion, if granted, would sacrifice the foreign trade of India, or, that it might be used as an engine for the destruction of the company's charter. In his opinion, the directors had not given due encourage-

Digitized by Google

ment to the private traders, under the act of 1793. He entertained no fears with respect to the adoption of the proposition, nor did he think that by it we should lose the sovereignty of the seas. The application was not for an attack upon the charter, but only for an inquiry into a grievance, the existence of which was acknowledged. The object of the motion was fair and laudable; and its adoption would tend to the salvation of the India company, and the general prosperity of the nation.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that the first ground on which he should oppose the motion was, the charter of the India company, which vested in the court of directors, the sole control in this affair; and, without violating that charter, and with it the faith of the nation on which it stood supported, it was impossible to comply with the motion. If he conceived there was any thing in that charter contrary to the public welfare, or that the motion before the House was calculated to remove any such principle in the privileges of the India company, there was no man in the House less disposed than he was to be deterred by such cant as the phrase of "chartered rights," from acceding to the inquiry proposed. But neither proof nor argument had been adduced to convince him that any necessity for such inquiry existed. The bill for renewing the charter of the India company had been drawn by an able hand; and by this bill a line was drawn, by which the limits of private and public trade with India were amicably adjusted. A regulation was in reality exacted from the company in favour of private traders, by which 3,000 ton of shipping was exclusively appointed for the convenience of the private trade; and discretionary powers vested in the court of directors to extend that quantity, if occasion should require. But now an attempt was made for opening that bill again to consideration, in his mind impolitic and unnecessary. Not one single proof was adduced, of any injury to any party. How, then, were the assertions of the hon. baronet supported? Not by the public voice, for in all England there did not appear to be 500 persons in support of his opinions. A board of control had been appointed under the act, and the rates of freight settled, at 15*l.* per ton outwards, and 5*l.* home, subject to further revision as occasion might require. But did it ever enter into the contemplation of any man, that India-built shipping was intended by the act? He remembered a proposition of the sort being brought forward by the company some years ago, and he well recollected the general alarm it created on both sides the river. What was the claim set up by the men who now demanded such a privilege? Why, no pretence of right, but a pretty plain menace, that if you refused them the privilege, they were ready to employ the ships of rival nations: a menace, which, in his mind, did not go to entitle them to much indulgence from that House. The worthy baronet had sanctioned his proposal under the name and example of the marquis Wellesley. To that nobleman, high in character and learning, no man was more ready to pay respectful deference than he was; and, had the question been one of classical research, no man would have more cheerfully bowed to the judgment of the noble lord. But, upon the subject of policy and regulation for the government of India, he was not quite so ready to surrender his own judgment. The House had been told by the right hon. gentleman who introduced the East India charter, that this country would very shortly derive an aid of half a million a year from the company. He should have no objection to see the money brought forward; but, unfortunately for the prophet, his prediction was yet unfulfilled.—He expressed his sincere regret that this question had been brought forward; for if in India, an idea once went forth that the servants of the company were able to triumph over their masters in an appeal to parliament, there was no calculating the mischiefs that might ensue. If the use of India shipping was such a tower of strength to the servants of the company, why was it not equally advantageous to the company themselves? But, if once granted to the servants, he had the most serious fears for the extent of colonization in India. For, allowing that the agents were to obtain what they wished, would their claims end there? Would such claimants be content with what they now pretended was the full measure of their desires? If the charter of the company was once attacked and laid open, what security would there remain for any exclusive privilege or regulation which now existed? If cheapness in the conduct of the trade was the grand argument of the agents, consider to what it might go:—it might be found out, that the

Digitized by Google

trade was not carried on most advantageously to the port of London; it might be said that greater facilities, that cheaper warehouses, &c. could be obtained at Liverpool, at Glasgow, or any other port of Great Britain or Ireland. New applications would be made, memorials and complaints would pour in on every side against the obstacles raised by the company, and demanding new facilities, till the whole system of the India company, and the present connexion of this country with India, was destroyed. Those claimants would have the popular side of the question; they would hold out the captivating language of bringing all the trade of India to the port of London: it would be said, that we might easily exclude foreigners from participating in our advantages; London, they would say, would be rendered the emporium of the world; and there would not be wanting those who would be charmed with those brilliant prospects. But, in fact, it was doubtful whether, if practicable, it was advantageous that foreigners should be deprived of their share in the trade. He saw no advantage in producing that envy and disgust among other nations which would render peace insecure. Nor, in fact, was it possible to exclude foreigners. It was proved, that though the private trade had increased, the trade of foreign nations with British India had increased likewise. Complaints had been made that the act of 1793 had not succeeded in its objects, and that now it was necessary to carry its spirit into effect. This, indeed, appeared a strange conclusion. For his part, on the face of it there appeared to be ground to think that it had succeeded, and that in the very point of the private trade. It appeared that, in the year previous to the passing of that act, the private trade had amounted in value to about 800,000*l.*, and now it had advanced to 2,300,000*l.* The danger of colonization, the increase of trade had an obvious tendency to render greater; the company would naturally, therefore, be more careful in granting licences for residence in their territories. But, would it not be required that, with the increase of trade, a greater number of merchants should be in India to carry it on? What bounds then could be set to the increase of resident merchants in India? It was true, that the circumstances of India and America were very unlike. In America, every thing was wild and uncultivated. In India every thing was made. Besides other establishments there was an army; and, though the fidelity and merit of that army were indisputable, such were the habits of the company's servants, that the military, among others, expected to profit by any new facilities of trade. Houses would be established, and become hereditary in India, with immense wealth. It was said that capital would find its way to England. He did not doubt that it would seek the mother country; but in a new state of things, and new hereditary commercial establishments, it was not so easy to determine which was the mother country. The real mother country was that where a man resided, that where he enjoyed his advantages; and surely this view of the case would be most natural to those who professed to be guided merely by views of cheapness and superior gain. But was it nothing that English ship-building was to be transferred to India? It was pretended, that the ship-builders in the Thames would be equally benefited by the repair of India-built ships coming to the river. This, however, was not well founded. He found, that out of 200,000*l.* expended one year on ships of this description, not 20,000*l.* was expended in articles that really belonged to ship-building. It was a very serious matter that the work of the ship-builders at home should be transferred to any other quarter. He could not consent that India-built vessels should be set up in rivalship with our own. After the services of our dock-yards at home, those concerned in them, might have reason to complain, if advantages against them were given to India-built ships; and it ought to be remembered how useful, on many occasions, the dock-yards appropriated chiefly to East India shipping had been. But with respect even to the cheapness of India-built ships, he was not convinced. In the price of the timber alone could that cheapness consist, as most of the articles of outfit were sent out from this country. Upon the whole, when he considered the offers made by the company, he thought the directors did rather too much than too little. Every thing in India depended upon the opinion entertained of the company's vigour and firmness. Their servants, he feared, would consider this already as a victory over them. The court of directors were accused of throw-

Digitized by Google

ing difficulties in the way of the free trade; but he rather thought that their readiness to grant facilities produced unreasonable demands. On the whole, he was decidedly against the motion.

After some farther conversation the previous question was put and carried.

Copy of the Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain and the Sublime Porte.] Nov. 24. Lord Hawkesbury presented the following

TRANSLATION of TREATY of ALLIANCE between his Majesty and the Ottoman Porte; signed at Constantinople, January 5th, 1799.

In the Name of Almighty God!—The constant and uninterrupted good understanding which has ever subsisted between the august court of London and the sublime Ottoman Porte, as well as the circumstances and situation of the war in which the two sovereigns of the British and Ottoman empires are engaged, in consequence of the perfidious and numerous aggressions of the French, have inspired those sovereigns with a mutual desire to draw still closer their ancient bond of friendship: And a definitive alliance having already been concluded between the Sublime Porte and his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, the friend and ally of his Britannic majesty, by which alliance, founded on the basis of a mutual guarantee of their empires, of the re-establishment and consolidation of general tranquillity, and of the preservation of the other powers, it is agreed that his Britannic majesty shall be invited to accede to it: Their said majesties, namely, his majesty George 3rd, king of Great Britain, &c. &c. &c. and his imperial majesty sultan Selim 3rd, the most mighty Ottoman emperor, equally desirous of contributing to the safety and to the interests of their respective subjects, and to the re-establishment of the general tranquillity of Europe, have, for these purposes, named for their plenipotentiaries; viz. the king of Great Britain, on his part, sir William Sidney Smith, knight, commander, grand cross of the royal military order of the Sword, and commodore of his squadron actually in the seas of the Levant, and John Spencer Smith, esquire, his minister plenipotentiary actually residing at the sublime Ottoman Porte; and his imperial majesty, on his part, the most excellent and most honourable Esseid Ibrahim Ismael Bey, distinguished by the title of Cazi Asker of Romilio, and formerly cadi of Constantinople, and Ahmed Aatif Reis Effendi, who, after having reciprocally communicated their full powers in good and due form, have agreed upon the following articles:

ART. 1.—His Britannic majesty, connected already with his majesty the emperor of Russia by the ties of the strictest alliance, accedes by the present treaty, to the defensive alliance which has just been concluded between his majesty the Ottoman emperor and the emperor of Russia, as far as the stipulations thereof are applicable to the local circumstances of his empire, and of that of the sublime porte: And his majesty the Ottoman emperor enters reciprocally by this treaty into the same engagements towards his Britannic majesty, so that there shall exist for ever between the three empires, by virtue of the present defensive treaty, and of the alliances and treaties which already subsist, peace, good understanding, and perfect friendship, as well by sea as land, so that for the future the friends of one of the parties shall be the friends of the two others; and the enemies of one shall, in like manner, be considered as such by the others. On this account the two high contracting parties promise and engage to come to a frank and mutual understanding in all affairs in which their reciprocal safety and tranquillity may be interested, and to adopt, by common consent, the necessary measures to oppose every project hostile towards themselves, and to effectuate general tranquillity.

2. In order to give to this alliance a full and entire effect, the two high contracting parties mutually guarantee to each other their possessions; His Britannic majesty guarantees all the possessions of the Ottoman empire, without exception, such as they stood immediately before the invasion of the French in Egypt: And his majesty the Ottoman emperor guarantees all the possessions of Great Britain, without any exception whatever.

3. Notwithstanding the two contracting parties reserve to themselves the full right of entering into negotiation with other powers, and to conclude with them whatever treaties their interests may require, yet they mutually bind themselves in the strongest manner, that such treaties shall not contain any condition which can ever produce the least detriment, injury, or prejudice, to either of them, or affect the integrity of their dominions; on the contrary, they promise to regard and preserve, to their utmost, their reciprocal honour, safety, and advantage.

4. In every case of an hostile attack upon the dominions of one of the contracting parties, the succours which the other is to furnish shall be regulated by the principles of good faith, and in conformity with the close friendship subsisting between the two empires, according to the nature of the case.

5. Whenever the two contracting parties make common cause either with all their forces, or with the succours furnished by virtue of this alliance, neither party shall make either peace, or a durable truce, without comprising the other in it, and without stipulating for its safety; and in case of an attack against one of the two parties in hatred of the stipulations of this treaty, or of their faithful execution, the other party shall come to its assistance in the manner the most useful and the

Digitized by Google

most conformable to the common interest, according to the exigency of the case.

6. The two high contracting parties have agreed and resolved, that when their fleets, squadrons, ships, and other vessels of war, shall meet, they shall salute each other, attention being paid on both sides, in order to begin the salute, to the superiority of rank of the commanders, manifested by the flag of command; and in case of an equality of rank no salute shall be made. The salute shall be answered by the same number of guns as were fired by the party first saluting. Boats shall be reciprocally sent upon these occasions for the purpose of concerting the mode of salute, in order to avoid all misunderstanding.

7. The trophies, and all the plunder taken from the enemy, shall be the property of the troops making such capture.

8. The two high contracting parties being actually engaged in war with the common enemy, have agreed to make common cause, and not to conclude any peace or truce but by common consent, as it has been stipulated in the fifth article; so that on the one side the Sublime Porte, notwithstanding the cessation of the actual attack directed against her dominions, shall be bound to continue the war, and to remain attached to the cause of her august allies, until the conclusion of a peace just and honourable, as well for them as for herself; and, on the other side, his Britannic majesty, shall be equally bound not to make peace with the common enemy without providing for the interests, the honour, and the safety of the Ottoman empire.

9. The two allies, making thus common cause, promise to communicate to each other their intentions relative to the duration of the war, and to the conditions of peace, governing themselves by just and equitable principles, and having an understanding with each other in this respect.

10. In order to render more efficacious the succour to be furnished on both sides during the war, according to the spirit of the present treaty of alliance, the two high contracting parties will concert together upon the operations most suitable to be made in order to render abortive the pernicious designs of the enemy in general, and especially in Egypt, and to destroy their commerce in the seas of the Levant, and in the Mediterranean; and for this purpose his majesty the Ottoman emperor engages not only to shut all his ports, without exception, against the commerce of the enemy, but likewise to employ against them in his dominions (and in order to prevent the execution of their ambitious projects) an army, consisting at least of 100,000 men, and even to augment it, in case of need, to the extent of his whole forces; he shall also put his naval forces in a state of preparation to act in concert with those of his allies in the seas abovementioned;—and his Britanic majesty, on his part, reciprocally engages himself to employ in the same seas, a naval force always equal to that of the enemy, to annoy them; and to act in concert with the fleets of his allies, in order to impede the execution of their plans, and especially to prevent any attack upon the dominions or provinces of the Ottoman empire.

11. In as much as the presence of the British forces in the seas of the Levant has for its principal object the defence of the Ottoman coasts, and that desertion by weakening the means, must unavoidably hurt the cause, the two high contracting powers promise not to tolerate it under any pretext or motive.

12. Notwithstanding the two high contracting parties desire to maintain these engagements in force as long as possible, nevertheless, as circumstances might in time require some change, it is agreed to fix the term of eight years for this definitive treaty of defensive alliance, to be computed from the day of the ratifications being exchanged. At the expiration of this term, the two parties, shall enter into amicable explanations for the renewal of it, conforming themselves to the then situation of affairs.

13. The present treaty of defensive alliance shall be ratified by his majesty the king of Great Britain, and his majesty the emperor of the Ottomans; and the ratifications shall be exchanged at Constantinople in three months, or sooner, if possible.

In Witness whereof, we, the undersigned ministers plenipotentiary aforesaid, have signed the present treaty of alliance; and have affixed to it the seal of our arms, together with that of his Britannic majesty's legation at the Sublime Ottoman Port. Done at Constantinople the fifth of January 1799.

(L. S.) William Sidney Smith.
(L. S.) J. Spencer Smith.
(L. S.) Ibrahim Ismael Bey.
(L. S.) Armed Aatiff Reis Effendi.

On the 15th of December, both Houses adjourned for a week, and which mode was continued until the 19th of January, 1802, without any business of importance being agitated. On that day, the earl of Carlisle, in the Lords, pressed upon the attention of that House, the very great uneasiness which these short and repeated intermissions of the meetings of parliament had upon the people at large. He insisted, that it was the duty of ministers to assign their motives for adjourning that House so often. He wished to be informed, whether ministers had known of the intention of France to send a vast armament from that country to the West Indies before the signing of the definitive treaty of peace? Whether that was done in consequence of an agreement between

Digitized by Google

the two countries? and, whether his majesty's ministers had taken the necessary precautions to guard against the consequences that might follow from the French having such a force in the West Indies? But it was not alone the great accession of force to France in that quarter of the world which was to be dreaded, the power of Spain would be vastly augmented; five Spanish ships of the line sailed from Brest with the French fleet, and under the protection of its flag; which, added to nine, the Spanish force at the Havannah, would render that power truly formidable. And all this was done before it was known whether Great Britain had made peace with Spain or not; because, his lordship added, for any thing we knew to the contrary, we were still at war with that power. He could find no document by which he was to conclude that we were at peace with her; and that, therefore, he wished his majesty's ministers would satisfy the public upon that head. He wished then to ask ministers, whether we were at peace with Spain or not? To that part of the preliminary treaty by which the island of Trinidad was ceded to this country, it did not appear that the consent of Spain had either been asked or obtained. No negotiation was carried on, nor treaty entered into between any Spanish and British minister. Was it not necessary then to know how we actually stood with respect to that country?—Lord Pelham, in reply, informed the House, that it was in consequence of a previous understanding between Great Britain and France, that the armament lately sailed from Brest; that that fleet had a particular destination and a specific object in view, and that it could not be contrary to the interests of Great Britain if it succeeded in its object.—Mr. Elliot, in the House of Commons, on the same day, and upon the same grounds with lord Carlisle, attacked the ministry. He took a view of the consequences which the sailing of the Brest fleet was likely to produce on the progress and conduct of the pending negotiation. Should war recommence, he said, the French might strike an immediate and dangerous blow in some of our most important colonial possessions. They had now the means of doing so, though it was probable they would delay the execution of their hostile designs. They would probably postpone the accomplishment of their ulterior objects of aggrandisement, until they had secured the vast cessions which the preliminary treaty had proposed that we should make them. Until then, France might allow us to enjoy peace, while we should be obliged to keep up an expensive establishment in the West Indies, to guard against her machinations. "Such was the peace we were to enjoy; a peace delusive and insecure; a peace which would operate to put France in possession of that which she had so long sought, a naval force, which he much feared would enable her to accomplish that in which all her hopes and wishes centered; that which all her exertions, intrigues, and state papers for years back have been contrived and calculated to produce; namely, what she called the liberty of the seas; but which would be, in fact, the annihilation of the commerce and consequence of Great Britain." Mr. Chancellor Addington and lord Hawkesbury reduced the defence of the measures of administration, on the point alluded to, to two heads; first, that the sailing of the French fleet manifested no hostile purpose, and that previously to its having sailed, that there had been a communication with the British government upon the subject; and, secondly, that ministers had not neglected to take every precautionary measure to guard against any prejudicial effects that might be apprehended. For the fact of both these assertions, they claimed the confidence of the House, as at present it was too delicate a matter upon which to enter into a full explanation.—Repeated adjournments of the sitting of parliament still continued to fill up the anxious interval which occurred until the signature of the definitive treaty. The death of the earl of Clare, lord high chancellor of Ireland, caused a vacancy in the chair of the House of Commons, his majesty having been pleased to appoint sir John Mitford, the Speaker, to fill up that high office.

Mr. Speaker Mitford resigns.] Feb. 9, 1802. Mr. Ley, the clerk at the table, acquainted the House, that he had, this morning, received a letter from Mr. Speaker; which he read to the House as follows:

"*Palace-yard, 9th Feb.* 1802.

"Sir; His majesty having been graciously pleased to signify his intention of appointing me chancellor of Ireland, it has become my duty to resign the chair of the House of Commons; which I re-

Digitized by Google

quest you to communicate to the House, at their meeting this day. I must entreat you at the same time to express to them, in the strongest terms, the regret with which I quit the high situation to which their favour had raised me; and my gratitude for their constant and kind assistance and support, in my humble attempts to discharge the arduous duties of that important office. I have the honour to be, &c.

"John Ley, esq. JOHN MITFORD."

&c. &c. &c."

After which, and before any member spoke, the mace was brought into the House by the serjeant, and laid under the table. Then Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer acquainted the House, that his majesty, under the circumstances referred to in Mr. Speaker's Letter, gives leave to this House to proceed to the choice of a new Speaker; and that it is his majesty's pleasure that this House should present their Speaker on Thursday next, in the House of Peers, for his royal approbation.

Mr. Abbot Chosen Speaker.] Feb. 10. The Serjeant having brought the Mace, and laid it under the table,

The *Master of the Rolls* (sir W. Grant) rose and said:—Mr. Ley; the event which was yesterday announced to the House renders it necessary for us to supply the vacancy, in the office of Speaker, which that event has occasioned. It is impossible not to regret that we should so soon be deprived of the services of one, who, in the short time that he has filled the Chair, has so amply justified the choice that placed him in it. Indeed, with knowledge so various and so profound, with information at once so accurate and so extensive, as he possessed, he could not fail to do credit to that situation, even difficult as his predecessor had made it for any man to appear in it to advantage. It is some consolation, that, if he be lost to our immediate service, a great and valuable portion of the empire is about to enjoy the benefit of his talents in its first place of judicial magistracy. How he will fill that place, can be no doubt with those who know, that in the whole compass of legal science, there is nothing which his capacious mind has not embraced, from the minutest rules of forensic practice, to the most enlarged principles of general jurisprudence. Fortunately for the country the talents it produces are adequate to the various services which it requires. The House abounds with knowledge and ability of every description. Yet I believe that, on such occasions as the present, gentlemen naturally turn their thoughts towards a few, as more peculiarly qualified, by their studies, and pursuits, for the discharge of the duties of the Chair. Among those to whom our attention is thus directed, it may not be easy to find decisive motives of preference; but by our choice, it is eminent, not exclusive fitness that is implied. From our selection of one, it is not to be inferred, that there are not others who would honourably and ably discharge the same trust if they were invested with it. If a knowledge of the laws and constitution of our country—if a thorough acquaintance with our parliamentary history, and with those records in which are treasured up, as well the rules and usages that govern our proceedings, as the principles and practices which have gradually developed themselves in the admirable constitution we now enjoy—if a constant endeavour to direct the attention of the House to measures of great national utility, and an active and persevering industry in carrying those measures into effect when adopted by the House—if a firmness and an integrity that ensure upright conduct and impartial decision—if these be qualifications for the high station which is now vacant, I am convinced that the gentleman whom I mean to propose for the consideration of the House possesses eminent fitness for that station—for that these qualifications do belong to him will, I hope, be admitted, when I say that Mr. Abbot is the gentleman to whom I allude. All who have sat in the House with that right hon. gentleman, have witnessed the extent and the value of his labours. They have seen that his parliamentary life has been one continued series of useful exertion. To that exertion the public is already indebted for several beneficial arrangements. In collecting the materials, and laying the foundation of many others, he has been mainly instrumental. If such have been the spontaneous efforts of his zeal as a private member of parliament, what may we not expect from that zeal, when directed to the performance of high official duties, and stimulated by the animating influence of illustrious examples? I move, Sir, "That the right hon. Charles Abbot do take the Chair as Speaker."

Mr. *Baker* took great pleasure in seconding the motion. He had witnessed

Digitized by Google

in the right hon. gentleman proposed to fill the chair, the most careful investigation of subjects the most intricate and laborious, and the frequent exertion of qualities the most essential to the discharge of the high duty which he was now proposed to fill. He came most happily recommended by the temper, moderation, and steadiness with which he had not only made the arrangements he had engaged in, but with which he had met the difficulties and the objections which he had to encounter in their prosecution. There was another circumstance which should also recommend him to the choice of the House; Mr. Abbot was at a time of life which permitted the House to look for his continuing long in the office; a circumstance which should not to be overlooked, as frequent changes were apt to obstruct the progress of public business.

Mr. *Sheridan* said:—When the right hon. gentleman, now appointed to a very high office, was named as a proper person to fill the chair of this House, I had the misfortune to differ from those by whom he was proposed, and I proposed another. I will not mention the removal of that person without joining in the commendations bestowed on him, or without declaring that I think his present appointment a public benefit. Having, been of a different opinion from those by whom that gentleman was proposed, I should act wrong if I did not now hold a similar conduct; for the same motives remain. In pursuing this conduct, I disclaim all personal opposition. I join most warmly in the praises bestowed on the right hon. gentleman already proposed; but I cannot help condemning the practice of looking only to the law for persons to fill our chair. It was anciently the custom to look to individuals not holding offices dependent on the pleasure of the crown. It is the undoubted right of the crown to dispose of all offices dependent on the crown; but it is the right of the House to appoint its Speaker, and the House ought to be jealous of the disposal of an appointment peculiarly its own. If the House concurs always in appointing persons holding offices under government, it seems to me to be in some degree deferring to the crown. I believe the right hon. gentleman now proposed holds a place under the crown; but possibly he has resigned it. I have at one time said, that such resignations were not quite so decorous. It seems to be presuming too much on the certainty of being appointed to hold a nomination equivalent to an election. It is not so honourable in the House to seem to accept their Speaker from the nomination of a minister. I wish that we should stand free from the suspicion, and choose for ourselves; and I have no doubt that we can find persons fully qualified to fill the chair, without looking to that legal knowledge which is by no means requisite in order to fill it with dignity and impartiality. I have no doubt that we can find persons so qualified, independent of the crown, and free from party connexion. As to age, that indeed would be a material recommendation of the right hon. gentleman, if death alone were to remove him from the chair; but we have now had sufficient experience of the gentlemen of the law, to know that, though they call this the height of their ambition, yet, if if any thing higher should be offered to them, they leave us to lament the loss of their experience and abilities. It is under these impressions, that I propose Mr. Charles Dundas; at the same time assuring the right hon. gentleman proposed on the other side, that if he shall be elected, as, from the quarter from whence he is proposed I have no doubt he will be, his exertions in the chair shall have my cordial support.

Lord *George Cavendish* seconded the motion. He acknowledged that Mr. Abbot possessed all the qualifications that had been ascribed to him, but he objected to his election, because he had so recently held an office under the crown. The same objection could not be urged against his hon. friend, whose other virtues and qualifications were so well known, that it was unnecessary for him to detain the House by enumerating them.

Mr. *Courtenay* was glad to see the motion seconded by the noble lord, and fully concurred in the eulogium bestowed on the late Speaker, whose conduct in the chair had acquired him the unanimous approbation of the House. Neither did he doubt but that the learned gentleman who was proposed to succeed him, would exert similar abilities, when once placed in office. His occult qualities might then burst forth in all their lustre, though no person before had suspected their existence. Yet, with all these qualities to recommend him, he could not help thinking that there was another gentleman in the House (Mr. Addington) who possessed still more appropriate talents for the office,

Digitized by Google

and whom the House would no doubt rejoice to see again in the chair. But it might be objected, that that gentleman already filled a very high political situation, from which he could not be removed without imminent danger to the public service. This objection was, however, easily to be got over, for the gentleman now proposed for the chair would, with perhaps equal ability, fill that high ministerial office; for great offices had a wonderful power in bringing out latent talents, which even the possessors did not dream that they possessed, until thus placed in an eminent station. There was a certain friction connected with a great place, that elicited a blaze of abilities equal, if not superior, to the office itself. Besides, the office of Speaker disentangled the mind from all the shackles of partiality; the practice of that impartiality begot a principle which made a man stifle even his private wishes; and if he afterwards passed into a greater situation, he carried that principle of impartiality along with him. This the House must have seen realized very recently; for this habit of the chair so prevailed of late with a right hon. gentleman (whom he wished to see again in that office) that after several hours contest, it was impossible to say whether that right hon. gentleman, on the occasion alluded to, was more disposed to support his old friends or his new allies. Perhaps, however, there might be some parliamentary impediment in the way of his re-election to the place of Speaker: if so, Mr. Ley would explain. All that he had in view was to see every man in the station for which he was best fitted.

Mr. *Abbot* said:—In offering myself to the notice of the House upon the present occasion, it is impossible that I should not feel the strongest emotions of respect to the House, and gratitude to my friends. But I cannot persuade myself that the partiality and kindness of my hon. friends, who have stood forward to-day, can be accepted by the House as proofs of my fitness for the high and honourable office which is now vacant. To reflect upon the learning, the talents, and the virtues which have for so many centuries successively dignified that Chair, must fill any man with a just apprehension of his own insufficiency to execute its various duties with the dignity and ability which so important a trust demands. If, indeed, an ardent zeal for the constitution, a rooted attachment to the privileges of this House, and a sincere admiration of its invaluable forms of proceeding, may be considered as sufficient qualities for such a choice,—I believe they belong in common to every member of this House:—and so far unquestionably, if the House shall think fit to grant its indulgent support to any of its members in that high office, he may accomplish much; although if that support be withheld, or withdrawn, his best endeavours will be ineffectual. I have only to add, that my humble services are at the disposal of the House; and whether they shall be pleased to accept, or reject them, no event can diminish my respect for its determinations.

Mr. *Charles Dundas* frankly confessed that, in point of abilities, he could not come in competition with the learned gentleman who spoke last. His habits of life precluded him from such pretensions. They were the habits of a country gentleman, who aimed at nothing more than honestly doing the business of his constituents in parliament. The eminent talents which distinguished the two hon. gentlemen who had lately filled the chair, had given him a full idea of the great qualities necessary to the discharge of such an arduous duty, and made him sensible that he was incapable of the same exertion. He hoped, therefore, he should be permitted to decline an office which he was not qualified adequately to fill, and that the hon. gentleman who made the motion in his favour would withdraw it.

Mr. *Ormsby* said, it was highly gratifying to Irishmen, that his majesty had been pleased to reward, with a high situation in Ireland, a right hon. gentleman who had been so eminent for his political services in this country; and at the same time he must observe, that by the vote of that day, the sister kingdom would lose as useful and persevering a friend, as ever had the management of her affairs. The right hon. gentleman now proposed to fill that chair, had shown as much zeal to promote the best interests of Ireland as ever any man had done; the whole island was unanimous in his praise.

The question being put by the clerk, "That the right hon. Charles Abbot do take the Chair of this House, as Speaker," was agreed to. Whereupon Mr. Abbot was conducted to the chair by the master of the Rolls and Mr. Baker; where, standing upon the upper step of the chair, he again addressed himself to the House, and made his respectful acknowledgments to

Digitized by Google

the House, for the high honour conferred upon him; and assured the House that it should be his constant endeavour to merit their good opinion, by a diligent and impartial discharge of his duty. And then he sat down in the chair; and the mace (which before lay under the table) was laid, by the serjeant, upon the table. And Mr. Secretary at War congratulated Mr. Speaker elect. After which the House adjourned. On the following day, Mr. Abbot was presented in the House of Peers, for the royal approbation, and approved of by the king.

King's Message respecting the Civil List.] Feb. 15. Mr. Chancellor Addington presented the following Message from his Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His Majesty feels great concern in acquainting the House of Commons, that the provision made by parliament for defraying the expenses of his household and civil government has been found inadequate to their support.—A considerable debt has in consequence been unavoidably incurred, an account of which he has ordered to be laid before this House.—His Majesty relies with confidence on the zeal and affection of his faithful Commons, that they will take the same into their early consideration, and adopt such measures as the circumstances may appear to them to require. G. *R.*"

The Message was ordered to be referred to a Committee of Supply; and on the following day, the chancellor of the exchequer, by command of his majesty, presented the accounts respecting the civil list.

Debate in the Commons on appointing a Committee to consider the Civil List Accounts.] Feb. 17. Mr. Chancellor *Addington* rose and said:—Sir; I rise in pursuance of notice, to move that the several accounts relative to the expenditure of the civil list, be referred to a committee. If I were to follow the practice usually adopted upon these occasions, I should merely move, that the said accounts be referred to a committee of supply. But it appears to me to be due to the House, to the public, and to his majesty himself, that the circumstances which have occasioned such an accumulation of debts as appears upon these accounts should be fully investigated, as I am thoroughly convinced, if it should be the pleasure of the House to appoint the committee, that the result will convince every member that the causes which have occasioned this accumulation were, in a great degree, unavoidable. It will be recollected, that sixteen years have now elapsed since the arrangements and schedules were made, with reference to the various branches of the civil list to be provided for by parliament. Let the House recollect what has been the operation of the numerous articles of expenditure of which that civil list is composed. Let gentlemen advert to their own domestic concerns, and they will not be at a loss to account for a very large portion of that debt, the particulars of which are submitted to the House in these accounts. Sir, it would be inconsistent with the purpose for which the committee is to be appointed, if I were to enter into an enumeration of the receipts or expenditure of the civil list. All I wish is, that the House should go to the inquiry without any preconceived opinion, with respect to the nature of the debt, or the circumstances which have led to its accumulation. If the committee should be appointed, when the report shall have been made, I should wish the discussion should be as minute and ample as the importance of the subject undoubtedly requires. At present I shall move, "That a committee be appointed, to take into consideration the several accounts which were yesterday presented to the House by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, by his majesty's command, relating to his majesty's civil list; and that they do examine the said accounts, and report the same, as they shall appear to them, together with their observations thereupon, to the House."

Mr. *Manners Sutton* (Solicitor General to the Prince of Wales) said:—I hope, Sir, it will not be deemed improper in me to state to the House a circumstance relative to the affairs of his royal highness the prince of Wales, which appears to me necessary to be mentioned. It is well known, that the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall are a part of the revenues of the crown, till the birth of the eldest son of the king; and that on the birth of such eldest son the title becomes immediately vested in him as proprietor of the duchy, with all the rights, immunities, and privileges belonging to the same. Of course, these revenues are a fund to be secured during the minority of the prince of Wales, for his benefit. In the present

Digitized by Google

instance, these funds were not so applied, but were applied in aid of the civil list, which must have been increased from other sources if these funds had not existed. Therefore, in taking the account, though it may be said to be a question between his majesty and the prince of Wales, yet in reality, the question arises between the prince of Wales and the public. The public have received that revenue which was the property of the prince of Wales. If that could be a question between his majesty and the prince of Wales, I know his royal highness would readily consent to forego much of his right—he would sacrifice any thing to the feelings of his majesty on such a subject. The House may rest assured, that what I have stated are the genuine sentiments of the prince of Wales; but, Sir, this is certainly not a question between his majesty and his royal highness it is a claim he has on the public, for that which the public have received and not accounted for. When I state that the prince of Wales has an undoubted right to the dukedom of Cornwall, I state it not on my own opinion, but I speak from the concurrent testimony of many of the most eminent men in the profession of the law; and particularly of one of the most experienced and learned men at the bar, I mean Mr. Mansfield, who in concurrence with another gentleman of equal celebrity, has given the most decided opinion in favour of the right. I am aware, that some years ago, when this question was likely to be agitated, two very high and distinguished persons expressed doubts as to the right; but if the same state of facts had been laid before the learned gentleman to whom I have alluded, and my learned friend on my left hand, they would not, I am persuaded, have expressed any doubt as to the right of the prince of Wales to the revenue of his own property. The amount of this revenue, from the year 1762, the period of the birth of the prince of Wales, to the year 1783, when his royal highness came of age, is little short of 400,000*l.* Calculating this fund, with the rate of interest, it would have amounted, upon a fair estimation, to 900,000*l.* I do not mean to say, that some deduction should not be made on account of the expenses of the prince of Wales during his minority—for this I deduct 12,000*l.* a-year, granted out of the civil list, and 6,000*l.* more provided out of his majesty's privy purse. Whether the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall were applicable to the prince of Wales as an establishment for him till the year 1781, or not, yet, giving credit for the deduction and the allowance by his majesty, there would still remain, due to his highness, for the residue of the revenue of his duchy a sum of at least between 6 and 700,000*l.* Now, Sir, in the several provisions made for the establishment of the prince of Wales, as heir apparent to the crown, this was never taken into consideration; and I am convinced, it never could have been considered that any of the supplies voted by the House to his royal highness were intended as a satisfaction, in lieu of the revenue of the duchy of Cornwall. If I am not in an error, the account will stand thus: In 1781, there was a sum of 60,000*l.* voted to defray those expenses which occur to every one in the outset of life, and naturally to be expected with regard to the heir apparent. In 1787, there was a further sum of 160,000*l.* and 20,000*l.* for completing Carlton-house. In 1795, there was a sum of 20,000*l.* granted for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the marriage of his royal highness with the princess Caroline. The whole of this amounts to 260,000*l.*; and with respect to those items which relate to Carlton-house, the money ought not to be considered as spent by the prince of Wales, as it was laid out in the completion of a building in which the public has an interest. This will reduce the sum received by his royal highness to about 240,000*l.* a sum very short of what he is entitled to. I have certainly not taken into this calculation the annual income voted by parliament to the prince of Wales. It would be very unreasonable, indeed, that the income of his royal highness should be diminished, because he happens to be a creditor of the public. If we compare the income granted to the present heir apparent, with that which was allotted by parliament to his predecessor, the father of his majesty, it will be found that, with reference to the different periods, the amount is nearly the same. In 1742, the sum of 100,000*l.* a-year was granted to his royal highness Frederick prince of Wales. He was then only twenty-four years of age; and it was stated, that an income to such an extent was not entirely necessary to defray his expenses, but to enable him to support his rank and dig-

Digitized by Google

nity. The income to the present prince of Wales was, in 1783, 50,000*l.* In 1787 it was increased to 60,000*l.*, and in 1795 to 120,000*l.*, of which 70,000*l.* a-year was appropriated, by act of parliament, to the liquidation of his debts. Every one knows how much his royal highness has reduced every expense in his establishment. I think, when I state what has been, and is, the income of the present prince of Wales, and compare it with what was the income of his grandfather, prince Frederick,—when I state, that in 1742, 100,000*l.* was not thought too much for those necessaries and luxuries which a prince has a right to expect, it will not be conceived, by any one, that the income of his royal highness has been increased on account of any debt supposed to be due to his royal highness from the public. I hope, Sir, in making this statement, I have not said any thing that for a moment may excite an idea, that his royal highness has authorised me to express, on his part, any disappointment or dissatisfaction, or that he means to make the least complaint of the proceedings of parliament with regard to him: on the contrary, I know his royal highness feels impressed with gratitude for the obligations he owes to this House. I am persuaded he is satisfied, that, whenever his interest has been the subject of deliberation, the House has discharged its duty to the public and to himself. I have been anxious to state thus much, that the House and the public should be in full possession of the fact. It is important to the prince of Wales, that the public should know, that great as are the expenses imposed on him by his high rank and illustrious situation, they have not fallen heavy on the people of the country, or added to the distress and difficulty of the times. Looking, Sir, to the accounts, and considering them in the point of view in which I have submitted them to the House, I am convinced it will be found, that his royal highness has not received more than he is entitled to, but that a considerable balance is due to him, and that he is the creditor, and not the debtor, of the public. I have been desirous of removing any wrong impression which might have been entertained with respect to that illustrious personage, in whose honour and welfare every well-affected man in the kingdom is so deeply interested. I hope I have said nothing that has the remotest tendency either to embarrass the present government, or to reflect upon the conduct of the former. As to the rights of the prince of Wales to the revenues of the dukedom of Cornwall, though they unquestionably exist, yet I admit it is not the business of the chancellor of the exchequer to assert them. If the House shall think proper, at any time, further to investigate this matter, it will be my duty to afford every assistance in my power; but the House will forgive me for observing, that I think a motion upon such a subject would come with more propriety from some gentleman who is better known to the House than I have the honour to be.

Mr. Fox said:—Sir, I feel myself called upon to say a few words. The House, I am sure, is much obliged to the hon. gentleman for his very clear and able statement of the claims of the prince of Wales to the arrears of the duchy of Cornwall. I agree almost in every thing he has said, and sincerely hope that the matter will be seriously taken up by the House. I not only agree with the positions of the hon. gentleman, but I highly approve of the way in which he has unfolded them. If I do not agree with him when he says that no blame is to be attached to the present or former administration, I must admire his prudence in making the concession. But I must beg leave to set him right, when he says that his royal highness's claims have never been asserted. That they have never been effectually asserted, I allow. I myself have had the honour to state them several times, and to urge that they should be satisfied. If I do not now make any motion in support of them, it is not that my opinions are changed, but because I judge, from past experience, that there are others by whom they may be asserted with greater effect. In my opinion, his royal highness's claims are just; at any rate, they are well entitled to a candid discussion. The hon. gentleman says, he will press no motion, but will leave the subject to be taken up by others. In this I must differ from him. I think his royal highness could not have been better advised than to make this application to the House. I am clearly of opinion, that the sums voted to pay his royal highness's debts ought to be deducted, whatever may be said of the 60,000*l.* granted him on coming of age. But it is the duty of the House, either immediately to allow him the remainder, or to declare that his demands are groundless. He has laboured under hardships, and suffered vexation which, to an individual of any rank,

adding

Digitized by Google

must be almost insupportable. All his private affairs have been disclosed; his debts have been stated and commented upon; when, if he had received what was due to him, he never would have had occasion to apply for assistance. You have conferred upon him as a favour, what perhaps you would have been unjust in withholding from him; and perhaps he had a right to more than he has ever obtained.—The learned gentleman said, his royal highness has never complained of the restrictions under which he has been laid. If he were dissatisfied, I am the person whom he ought chiefly to blame: the measure of appropriating 70,000*l.* a year to the liquidation of his debts was of my proposal. His royal highness knows that, besides the respect I owe to him as heir apparent to the crown, he has ever had my best wishes for his honour, prosperity, and happiness. I therefore found it painful to propose such a step, but I considered it as my duty. I thought 120,000*l.* by no means too large an income to be granted to his royal highness. If Frederick prince of Wales, in 1742, was allowed 100,000*l.*, 125,000*l.* was by no means an increased allowance. There is another mode in which its amount may be estimated; let it be compared with the civil list, and particularly with the sums appropriated to those parts of it which correspond with the establishment of the prince. It will then be seen, that it was liberal, but by no means extravagant. Why, then, did I suggest and support a scheme which reduced it to 50,000*l.*? His allowance was at first too small, and the debts incurred, through this ill-judged parsimony, I thought the House bound to discharge. But when a settlement had been made, and his royal highness, though imprudently, had professed himself satisfied, I did not think it consistent with his honour to accept of money from the public to pay the debts which he had subsequently incurred.—If this reasoning was just, and if this plan was judicious, they will apply equally well to the civil list; and I should think most meanly of myself indeed, if I should not act in the same manner to his majesty himself. This will be a most material consideration, when the report of the committee shall come to be discussed. I believe there was nothing wrong in showing the usual respect to his majesty by referring his speech to a committee of supply; and as it is very necessary that an investigation should take place previous to this committee being gone into, I readily support the motion. But I should be extremely sorry if this vote should be construed into an acquiescence in the prayer of the message. On a future occasion I shall deliver my sentiments more at large; at present I shall content myself with laying down one general principle:—It is a material feature in our history, that, ever since the Revolution, immediately upon the accession of the prince to the throne, a grant has been made of the civil list for life. Upon this point, considerable contrariety of opinion prevailed, and some imagined that the grant should only be from year to year. Strong arguments in support of this opinion may be advanced, but it is not necessary here to adduce them. I shall merely say, that I have long considered the question with all the attention of which I am capable, and that, after the most mature deliberation, I am persuaded that our ancestors were wise in granting the civil list for life. When the question is revived, if my advice be taken, their example will be imitated. But, though an ample provision is made, it ought to be limited; a contrary system combines the disadvantages of both the others. If the civil list is frequently brought into parliament for aid, the provision is without limits. To say that expense has been increased by unforeseen circumstances, is nugatory; every period is subject to a variation of circumstances; and to pretend that, on this account, the allowance should be varied, is directly to abet the system of granting the civil list from year to year. If you cannot judge what will be a sufficient allowance for a series of years, a grant for life is absurd. Why will you vote 800,000*l.* a-year, when you are not sure but 1,000,000*l.* or 1,200,000*l.* will be required? The public in this way must be losers. The allowance cannot be diminished, whatever happy change of circumstances should occur; and whenever there is a pretended occasion for increased expense their burthens are augmented. I am friendly to a grant for life; but it is of the essence of such a provision that it should be strictly limited. I would have his majesty's ministers suit the expenses to the provision, not the provision to the expenses. These applications are founded upon quite a different principle, and suppose that the limitation of a particular sum by parliament is a mere form, and that every expense, how-

Digitized by Google

ever unnecessary or profuse, is to be supplied without reluctance. In every point of view the practice is mischievous. I shall suppose circumstances which it will be seen never existed in this reign. If politics were, as in the reigns of king William and queen Anne, perhaps I might say of George 1st and George 2nd, the most serious consequences might be felt from this practice. If the prince wanted money, not for purposes adverse to the interests of the country, but for purposes in which the country is not concerned, might he not go between Tories and Whigs to see who would give most? And might not political men barter the public money for royal favour? If the debts of the prince are to be paid, the case is the same. He readily allows his affairs to be involved, in the prospect of parliamentary assistance; and a minister is selected, not from his capacity, not from his esteem with the public, not even from personal favour; the only criterion of merit is compliance and profusion. As this is injurious to the constitution, so is it injurious to the prince himself. The crown becomes dependent upon parliament. No one will suspect me of a wish to make the crown independent; but this sort of dependance is highly unworthy of it. The prince is tempted into expense, and, to extricate himself, may be forced to practices unbecoming his station.—On the first view of the subject, I am against discharging these debts with the public money. That it may not appear proper to put them in a course of liquidation, like those of the prince of Wales, I by no means affirm. This will be better discussed upon the report. If you should at once clear them off, you would do the greatest injustice to the prince of Wales. There is no reason why there should be one rule for the son, and another for the father. His majesty expressed the most perfect satisfaction with the provision that had been made for him; and if, through the negligence of his servants, his expenses have exceeded it, the same plan should be adopted which met with the approbation of the House on a similar occasion.—I hope, then, the hon. member who has mentioned the subject of the prince's claims, will take an early opportunity of bringing it forward. I take shame to myself, that, in 1788, when I was a member of the administration, I did not bring it forward. From the day his royal highness attained his twenty-first year, to the present hour, the subject has lain dormant. Surely, then, his royal highness has waited sufficiently long the justice of the House; and, it is to be hoped it will now be speedily and finally settled. I should not be prone to encourage claims of this nature, if they were not justly founded; but I am perfectly convinced, that every shilling of the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall due to the prince of Wales (as having been applied either to the uses of the public, or of the king's civil list), ought to be paid him by the nation.

Mr. *Pitt* said:—After the claim advanced on the part of his royal highness, and stated with so much propriety and ability by the hon. gentleman, I do think it becomes the justice of the House to put the subject in the way of inquiry, in order that the point may be finally ascertained. I should be guilty of drawing the House into a premature discussion, if I were now to state my opinion upon the subject. I also acquiesce in the present motion; but, until the House has had an opportunity of ascertaining the cause of the deficiency of the civil list, it would be premature to enter into the merits of the question. While I agree with the hon. gentleman, that the grant for life of the civil list, is comparatively the best, I cannot agree in his conclusion, that parliament, by providing at the beginning of every reign a civil list for life, thereby precludes itself from granting such further sums as a change of circumstances may require.

Mr. *Nicholls* thought, that all the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall ought to have been accumulated during the minority of the prince, and paid over to him when he came of age. In an act passed in the 8th year of his present majesty, intituled, "An Act to enable his Majesty to make grants of Lands Parcel of the Duchy of Cornwall," the prince is stated to be the proprietor of the duchy of Cornwall. It was necessary that leases and grants should be made of the possessions of the duchy, and the king is enabled by the act to make grants of the lands; there was no clause in the act giving to the king the money arising from these sales; there was not even an estate vested in the king for the purposes of the trust, but a bare naked power unaccompanied with an interest. What colour, then, could there be for considering the money arising from these grants, as money belonging to the king? It certainly belonged to him whose

Digitized by Google

lands were granted; yet the ministers for the time being had seized this money as belonging to the king. The argument, that the prince's revenues, during his minority, were applicable to his maintenance, could by no possibility be of force in this case. If the revenues annually arising from the prince's lands were applicable to his maintenance, it could not be thought reasonable that the lands themselves should be sold, and the money arising from those sales applied to his maintenance. Even if the money arising from those grants, during his minority, had been accumulated and paid to the prince on his coming of age, it would be but a poor compensation for the loss he had sustained from the grants which had been made under this act. The lands of the duchy of Cornwall were in general leased only for thirty-one years. If no leases had been made during the minority of the prince, many of the leases would have been expired when he attained the age of twenty-one. No lease could possibly have had more than ten years to run. The prince, by the grant of new leases, might perhaps have raised a sum exceeding that which had been named by the learned gentleman. The money received for these leases, even had it been accumulated and paid to the prince, was a poor compensation. But, in fact, none of it had ever reached the prince; it had been seized by the ministers, and applied to the purposes of the civil list. Parliament was bound to see that this money was forthcoming for the use of the prince. It was not quite correct to say that no claim had ever been made by the prince. A petition of right had been presented by the prince to the late chancellor; that petition of right had not been sent to any court of justice to be examined; and this was an additional reason why the claim should be inquired into by parliament. Former parliaments had protected the property of the prince of Wales. In the fifth of Hen. 4th the Commons petitioned the king, that measures might be taken to revoke certain grants made by Richard 2nd of lands parcel of the duchy of Cornwall, which grants had been confirmed by Henry 4th. In consequence of this application from the House, a writ of *scire facias* was brought in chancery, in the king's name, and the grants revoked. In the present case, parliament, which, by passing the act enabling the king to make grants of the lands, had deprived the prince of his right, was more strongly called on to see that the money which had been received on the sale of these lands should be paid over to the prince.

The motion was then agreed to, and a committee appointed.

Feb. 22. Mr. *Manners Sutton* said, that having called the attention of the House on a former occasion to the claims of the prince of Wales, to the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall, he wished now to inform them, that while it was the desire of the prince that the subject should be thoroughly investigated, he was authorised by his royal highness to intimate to the House, that he should defer bringing forward the subject, until after the question relative to his majesty's civil list should be determined. He hoped therefore that gentlemen would abstain, in the course of the discussion of that question, from making any allusion to the claims of his royal highness.

Debate in the Commons on the Army Estimates.] March 3. The House having resolved itself into a committee of supply, to which the army estimates were referred,

The *Secretary at War* said, that the estimates were for sixty-one days, and related to some of the most pressing and important, but not to all the services. They were calculated exactly on the same scale with the estimates of last year. He then moved, "That a number of land forces, including 7,175 invalids, not exceeding 61,176 men, be employed in Great Britain, the islands of Jersey, Guernsey, &c. from the 25th of March to the 24th of May next."

Mr. *Elliot* said, he could not consider the motion as a mere matter of course, as he should do if the country was actually in a state of war; and therefore, though he strongly approved of the principle of keeping up a large force, yet he could not assent to the motion, without stating the motives which influenced his conduct. It had always been the custom for this country, when she was regulating the degree of force which it was proper for her to keep on foot, to pay a due regard to the situation and disposition of the continental powers, and to proportion her preparations to the state of other nations. It was on this principle that he felt the strongest conviction of the necessity of keeping up the large force which had been proposed. He was the more con-

Digitized by Google

firmed in this opinion, when he took into his consideration that strange and alarming succession of events which had occurred since the signature of the preliminaries of peace. Before he proceeded further, however, he would anticipate some of the arguments which he foresaw would be used against him, and endeavour to take off a kind of proscription which existed against him, because he had the misfortune to differ from the majority of the House, and from his majesty's ministers, on the subject of the preliminary treaty. While, however, he submitted to the collective wisdom of the House, he had no hesitation in declaring, that his sentiments with regard to that treaty remained unaltered, and that every day's experience had more and more confirmed him in the opinion which he had originally formed. He thought then, and he thought now, that when the noble lord (Hawkesbury) put his signature to the preliminaries, he put his hand to an instrument fraught with danger and humiliation to this country—to an instrument from which posterity would date the decline of this country. Parliament, however, had thought otherwise; and, as he had before stated, he submitted to their judgment. But although the House had given its sanction to those preliminary articles, it was not bound to adhere to the opinion it had expressed, if all the circumstances upon which that opinion was given had been since that time completely changed. One of the circumstances to which he alluded was, the extraordinary scene which had lately been played in Italy. Many persons were induced to approve of the preliminaries, from a hope that the government of France would in future act with moderation, and endeavour to consolidate the power which she had acquired. They thought, that although the Cisalpine republic was in a considerable degree under the influence of France, she might by degrees acquire a sort of independence, and form a sort of barrier between France and Italy. But subsequent events had completely undeceived those who entertained such hopes, and had shown them, that they were ignorant of that furious lust of power which actuated the government of France. If that government had stopped in her career for a moment, it was only to take breath, that she might renew it with redoubled vigour. We had seen an immense force sail from the ports of France, Spain, and Holland, without, as he believed, any communication of the specific object of that expedition. We had seen the chief consul of France go to Lyons, and, without any communication to any of the powers of Europe, declare that there was not one person in all the states which compose the Cisalpine republic, fit to be intrusted with the government of that country, and that, therefore, he would take it upon himself. He was, he confessed, seriously alarmed at this mode of reasoning which the chief consul had adopted; because, if we submitted to this incroachment, it was impossible to say that he might not, at a future period, apply it to this country, and graciously condescend to take us under his protection. The chief consul then returned to Paris, after having made himself president of the Italian republic, annexed all that rich country to France, and converted it into cantonments for French troops. But this was not all, he had also acquired the whole of the island of Elba: that island was, by the treaty of Luneville, to be annexed to the duchy of Tuscany; and immediately after he stipulated for the possession of Porto Ferrajo. Another point to which he must call the attention of the House was, that France had, by another treaty, acquired a very considerable territory on the banks of the Mississippi, and the means of supplying her West India islands independent of this country. He did not mean now, to ask in what situation we stood with relation to the president of the Italian republic, whether it was peace or war; but he could not help entering his protest against that act of fraud, ambition, and insolence. But he did hope the noble lord would explain to the committee, how it happened, that when we were discussing the preliminaries of peace, we thought we were giving Porto Ferrajo to Tuscany, when, in fact, we were giving it to France; and how it happened, that when we were giving back to France her West India possessions, we did not know that she had acquired possessions in that quarter which would render her colonies much more advantageous to her? He did, however, believe that ministers were, at that time, themselves ignorant of these circumstances. If, however, instead of treating with France in the name of her allies, we had treated with those allies conjointly with her, it was impossible but we must have known the relation in which she stood to other coun-

Digitized by Google

tries. If ministers had not taken the necessary means to inform themselves upon this subject, they had been guilty of negligence; if they did ask the question, and obtained no satisfactory answer, they were wrong in suffering the country to be treated with such indignity.—He must now allude to another circumstance, which formed a lamentable supplement to what he had already stated; which was, that since the signing of the preliminaries, a very large portion of the French, Spanish, and Dutch navies had sailed from their ports. It was true, we had also sent a large force to the West Indies; but it was difficult to guess what fleet the French thought they could have to contend against, in which such a force would be necessary, unless it was against the fleet of this country. It was undoubtedly true, that France, as well as every other state, had a right to dispose of her force as she pleased; but we had an equal right to make representations upon the subject, and even to resist an expedition, if it was dangerous to us. In 1778, when there was a war between the Russians and Turks, and when the former had obtained some considerable advantages in the Mediterranean, France fitted out from Toulon a squadron of observation on the Russian fleet. Upon that occasion we remonstrated with the court of France, and said, that if they persisted, we would send out a fleet of observation on the French fleet, and send out ship for ship with them: the consequence of this was, that France relinquished her design. On the present occasion we ought to have made a similar representation; and France would either have listened to it, or, by refusing to do so, would have shown her real disposition. It might be said, that France had no transports, and was always in the habit of sending out her troops in ships of the line; but if she had no transports, surely she had interest enough with Spain and Holland to procure them; indeed, it would have even been more satisfactory if we had furnished her with transports ourselves, provided we were convinced of the propriety of the expedition. These were shortly his reasons for voting for a continuance of our large establishments. The effect of this conduct on the part of France was, to make us keep up a very large force; in the mean time, trade was suspended, and we were left in a situation, in which we could neither obtain the advantages of war, nor enjoy the blessings of peace.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, he was ready to admit, that the inconveniencies which attended a protracted negotiation were very serious; but if any gentleman would consider the great variety of interests that were to be discussed in the present negotiation, and the great number of points that must necessarily come under consideration, he would not think this negotiation had continued to an extraordinary length. In 1783, when there were comparatively but few points to discuss, the preliminaries were signed in January, and the definitive treaty was not signed till September. No means had been, nor would be omitted, to bring the negotiation to a successful termination as soon as possible. Having stated thus much, the committee would not expect him to enter into a discussion upon all the points of the hon. gentleman's speech. The hon. gentleman had thought proper to make a personal allusion to him, with respect to his having signed the preliminaries of peace. Upon that subject, he could state, with the greatest sincerity, that, whatever the result might be, he should never regret the share he had had in that transaction, which he should always contend was creditable to this country, and gave to Europe the only chance for a long continuance of peace. Gentlemen might talk of the bad consequences of a peace; but he begged that they would also consider, what might be the bad consequences of a war; and that they would balance the inconveniencies of both together. The experiment of peace was, at least, as wise as the experiment of continuing the war. He was not aware that there were any other parts of the hon. gentleman's speech that called for explanation, which he could, with any propriety, at present give. At the proper opportunity neither he nor any of his colleagues would, he was sure, shrink from the discussion.

Mr. *James Cornwallis* observed, that the French expedition to the West Indies might have a fair and legitimate object; but, supposing the intentions of the French government should be hostile, and the negotiations terminated unfavourably, this country had nothing to apprehend. We had a force in the West Indies more than sufficient for the protection of our islands. We should have the opportunity of fighting and taking the French ships at sea, instead of counting them in their harbours.

Digitized by Google

Ministers, therefore, merited applause for having suffered them to sail. He saw no ground of alarm. There was no reason to question either the vigilance of our government, or the pacific disposition of the first consul. Did not every popular declaration on the part of France anticipate the blessings of peace? What, then, was our duty? Not to encourage suspicion, proclaim jealousies, and sound alarm throughout the country. Whatever might be the result of the negotiation, Great Britain would be prepared to meet the French at sea in any quarter of the world. The public had no cause for anxiety in consequence of the delay in the present negotiations.

Mr. *Windham* said:—Sir; when my hon. friend comes forward, and asks for that information which he conceives necessary to satisfy the public mind, I do not think I am going too far in saying, that the promised explanation of the noble lord will come rather too late. It will, I fear, prove little consolation for the country to learn the motives by which ministers may have been actuated, when it shall have felt the dangerous effects resulting from those motives. In admitting the responsibility of ministers, I also feel that a great responsibility is weighing on my own mind, from the silence which I have held so long; and I find much difficulty in excusing myself for having so long remained silent on a question in which the dearest interests of the country are involved. I indulged myself in the hope that ministers would have been the first to have brought forward the topics on which my hon. friend has touched; and their not doing it, tends to confirm any distrust which I may have entertained. If I take the language held out in the debates on the signing of the preliminaries of peace, and compare it with what has been since effected, I shall find no satisfactory grounds for me to banish my apprehensions. It would, indeed, appear that little has been done since that period. I feel, in common with others, the great evils resulting from suspense. Yet even these evils, and this state of suspense, are not sufficient to justify gentlemen in calling for explanations from his majesty's ministers. Reasons, however, of a more powerful nature are not wanting. Has nothing happened since the signing of the preliminaries to sanction inquiry? Every thing has happened which must be accounted sufficient to set aside the engagement entered into, and to invalidate the preliminaries. Every thing has happened which, politically and truly speaking, should destroy the contract. Every thing has so happened, that none who voted for the preliminaries in this House are bound to support them. The foundation on which they then gave their suffrages is actually destroyed; and the credit which they gave to the enemy for good faith and sincerity is no longer to be found. There are, Sir, three descriptions of events which must be seriously considered, in order to feel the force of this observation. First, events that have totally changed the basis and nature of the preliminaries: secondly, events that have changed the respective condition and state of the two countries; and thirdly, those which in fact belong to both, and which show the nature of the disposition and temper of the opposite party. The noble lord distinctly stated three considerations in which the preliminaries might be taken —the time, the terms, and the tone or the temper in which they were concluded. As to the time and the terms, they are gone by; and as to the tone, allow me to say a few words—I agree that it is a matter of the highest moment; for as the spirit at all times is better than the letter, particularly in political transactions, the temper of the enemy becomes a question of the greatest importance. But if he unexpectedly assumes new power, and acquires new dominion beyond all reason and probability, it must be evident that no confidence can be placed in his professions. But we are told, the more reliance we have upon his tone, the safer and the more secure we shall be; and, taking this as a rule of argument, we may go on to witness the aggrandizement and consolidation of his empire, because these are no proofs of the want of sincerity. When we see instances every day of his redoubled vigour, of his over-straining ambition, shall we subscribe to this doctrine, and give our assent to his moderation? If ministers will raise their heads from their dispatches, and read the great dispatch of the enemy, plain and legible as it is in every part of the globe, they will see undoubted proofs of his rooted determination to turn all events to his advantage against the interests of this country. If any thing like a correct idea of a preliminary treaty can be formed, I should say, that it is that state in which both parties should have stood still. It presents to the

Digitized by Google

mind the situation of a town besieged, when the mere cessation of hostilities takes place. No molestation is offered to those within, but no stores or provisions are allowed to enter from without. The besiegers carry on no new works; nor do the besieged repair their fortifications. In ascertaining the tone or temper of the opposite party, two things are to be considered—events that have subsequently happened, and events that have subsequently become known. The distinction is clear; and with those of the latter description, ministers should have been made acquainted. If, being intended by the enemy to be actually carried into effect, they were not communicated to his majesty's ministers, the party who concealed them was guilty of fraud. Some of these events are so plain, that it is impossible to mistake them. They may be found in an island, in a sum of money, in a district. Such was the violation of the integrity of Portugal, secured as it appeared to be by the preliminaries; but the treaty which destroyed that integrity was kept secret, and thus constituted that fraud of which I complain. Is it not, then, right in my hon. friend to call the attention of the House to the state of the country? or rather is it not the crying duty of every man who considers the situation in which we are placed? Although we are at present considering what may be called a small point in the general state of affairs, we are still justified in having the whole situation of the country before us. What appears to me above all other things the most dreadful consideration is, the unaccountable apathy of the moment. I know not exactly by what name to call it; but I should be inclined to compare this apathy to the blindness spoken of by the prophet—"Eyes have they, yet they see not; ears also have they, but hear not." To trace it to its cause, would be a task, I fear, too difficult for any man. What is the present state of Europe? What are the powers still left which are exempt from servitude or dependence? Take them all after ourselves, and we shall find Austria and Russia only which can be said to exist. But when we see the increasing power, and the self-acknowledged ambition of France, what security have we for our own power or independence? The head of the government of France plainly tells us, that he has got augmented influence, augmented territory, augmented dominion; and that he means to employ them to the destruction of our commerce, and our naval pre-eminence. The subject, Sir, is so dreadful, the prospect so dreary, that it appals me with its magnitude.

Mr. *Baker* said, that the country must still be considered as in a state of war; and if it should become necessary to resume hostilities in vindication of our rights, he trusted the House and the country would be prompt and unanimous in uniting all their strength and energy against the common enemy. With respect to the length of time occupied in the discussion of the definitive treaty, he thought it a matter of very little importance, compared with other events which had taken place in Europe since the commencement of that discussion. If it was our duty to adhere to the terms of the preliminary treaty, it was surely the duty of France to adhere to it on theirs. The noble lord had said that ministers would be responsible for the terms of the treaty when concluded; but he begged to remind them, that an acquiescence in points so materially different from the preliminary articles would very much increase their responsibility.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, he did not look on the preliminaries of peace in the same view as his hon. friend, nor could he see the policy of exciting despondency in the people. As for those events in our West India colonies, for which so much alarm had been expressed, he hoped they would not happen. Even if the French had any hostile views against our possessions in that quarter of the globe, they would find us amply prepared to defeat their purposes. There were, however, urgent reasons for the mission of a strong French force to the West Indies, without exciting alarm on the part of Great Britain. The situation of the French colonies in that quarter was extremely critical; and if France was to look to her colonies as to the legitimate means of her future aggrandisement, she would have ample means to divert her attention from projects of hostility towards this country. The black population of Domingo before the revolution was estimated at 250,000, with a very small proportion, indeed, of whites. That of Guadaloupe was estimated at 80,000 blacks, with very few whites comparatively: and if the present state of those colonies be considered, it must be allowed, that, even supposing Toussaint disposed to receive the French force sent

Digitized by Google

out as friends, and that they were actually landed in the colonies without any resistance from him, there would still be ample employment for the 30,000 French troops sent out, to restore order and man the different garrisons on those islands. Whether or not ministers exercised a sound discretion in suffering the French force to sail, France was at the time most critically situated with respect to her colonies; and it was not improbable that ministers might have seen the safety of our own colonies intimately connected with the proceeding. For other reasons, too, it was politic, on the part of the British government, not to interfere. Should the views of France prove hostile, it was desirable to have their fleet in a situation where we could meet them to advantage, instead of their being locked up in their harbours.

Dr *Laurence* asked, whether when the supplies which were on the point of expiring were applied for, there was not a conviction in the mind of ministers, that the definitive treaty would be signed before the period for which they were granted should have elapsed? Such must have been the ground upon which the supplies were only asked at that moment for two months. What, then, was the conduct of ministers now but a repetition of the same policy? With the delay he found no fault. He liked delay, because it evinced attention to the points of interest at issue, and furnished a proof of sincerity. In all former preliminaries there were compacts and modifications embracing prior engagements; but, in the present, there was no basis of that kind, no revision of treaties, no stipulation for the revival of pre-existing contracts. Had there been a stipulation in the present preliminaries reviving former treaties, this country would be established in the freedom of the navigation of the Mississippi, because the treaty of 1661, by which she possessed it, would be revived. There was, however, no such clause in the present preliminaries; and in consequence of that omission, the mouth of the Mississippi was now in the hands of our adversary (if so he might be allowed to call France) and without a specific and new stipulation, we should lose the benefit of our exterior establishments, and also our commerce with America within that river. The construction, therefore, put upon the argument of his hon. friend, as complaining of delay, was a fallacy. His hon. friend meant no such thing. He only wished to raise the spirit of the country, to excite its energy, and maintain that state of force and preparation which became it, pending the uncertain issue of a treaty, of which we know so little. The noble lord who spoke last, seemed to think the situation of the country so advantageous that explanation must be good at any time, because it would reveal nothing that was not matter of triumph. That noble lord was a political optimist: he saw nothing in the French expedition to the West Indies but arguments of consolation, and argued that a great military force was absolutely necessary to France in that quarter. It was, indeed, a melancholy truth, that the freedom introduced into that part of the world was of that species that required a great military force to restrain it. This, however, was no advantage to us. It could be no advantage to us that a country, our rival in commerce, in arts, and in arms, should possess, in a quarter in which that rivalship might prove most dangerous, not only the means of annoyance which that freedom afforded, but also the additional means of a great military force. From political situation and nature our rival she must be; and the only question was, whether that rivalship would be carried on generously, orby the insidious means by which it had been hitherto pursued. Admitting, however, a military force to be necessary, was there a necessity for such a formidable fleet? The fleet certainly was not necessary to the avowed objects of the expedition. It was originally said, that Toussaint would oppose a naval force to the landing of the French in St. Domingo; but no such opposition was pretended now. Another consolation to the noble lord was, that, in case of a renewal of the war, this country would stand in a better situation than if no such expedition had been sent out. At the time of the evacuation of Holland, it was said, that it would be good policy in ministers to give up the 8000 sailors whom France demanded, as it might be the means of inducing her fleet to come out and fight. But would that policy, admitting it to be such, apply to the present case? In case of a renewal of hostilities, the French fleet might do incalculable mischief where it was gone, before an English fleet could prevent it. Or, were we to maintain a force in the West Indies to blockade it

Digitized by Google

from year to year? At the time a naval truce was proposed, and France asked leave to send only a small expedition to St. Domingo, ministers refused, and were applauded for their refusal; yet we were now to be told, that the immense expedition sent to that quarter was an advantage to this country. Another consolation of the noble lord was, that, even in the event of peace, we might compel the French fleet to return sooner than if it should not have sailed until the definitive treaty; that, the sooner gone, the sooner back. He did not know how that mode of reasoning could be reconciled with the principle, that peace was better than war; for supposing the French fleet should refuse to come back at the time we thought it should return, was there any man in that House who would push such refusal to extremities, and advise a renewal of the war for that reason alone? He was convinced that no man would consider it as an adequate cause of war; and therefore, he thought, that ministers should now endeavour to secure, by the influence they possessed, those advantages which they could not enforce after peace without risking more than they were worth. There were other arguments used by his hon. friend, relating to Europe and the West Indies, which had received no answer. If there was fraud in one party, it became a nullity. The question, therefore, was, Whether fraud had been practised or not in the present case? Now, facts and dates clearly showed, that Louisiana had been ceded to France by a treaty anterior to the preliminaries with England; and that such cession was not made known to this country until after their ratification. For the consequence of that cession, see what the state of France now was in that part of the world. Look at that Colossus, with one foot upon the mouth of the Mississippi, and the other upon the mouth of the river of the Amazons, controlling and directing all the commercial relations and advantages between these two points! Behold it, then, stretching out a hand to strike our West India possessions, with all the facilities afforded it by the cession of the Spanish part of St. Domingo, and its other acquirements in that quarter! Was there nothing in all this to excite our vigilance? Look at the island of Elba. Was it supposed, when we surrendered a part of it to Tuscany, that it was not to remain to that duchy, and that it was previously agreed to deliver it to France? Such, however, had proved to be the fact; and this fact, he contended, made the preliminaries totally void. With such fraudulent conduct, manifestly committed on the part of our adversary, he would not be content with being told that we must have confidence in ministers. There was no House that knew its own dignity, that would not claim its right to say, that it could not be bound by that to which it had not given its assent; that it had, therefore, a right to inquire into a subject which a change of circumstances had rendered in some respects entirely new, and particularly in the case of a fraudulent cession studiously kept back from its view. The Cisalpine republic formed another objection, to which no answer had been given. It was a question at the time of the preliminaries, in what situation we were to stand with respect to that, ignorant as we then were of its precise state. New preliminaries must have consequently been since entered into; for, if not, there were none that included that country. He did not put this case with a view to an answer. He only stated it to show that, with the same person, as first consul of France, and president of the Cisalpine republic, and with a treaty offensive and defensive now existing between them, it would be in the power of the Cisalpine republic, in the event of a peace with France, to involve her in a new war with us, in which she should come in either as a principal or an ally. He admitted, that, in the subsequent conduct of France to the Cisalpine republic, there was no fallacy. It was then as much in the hands and power of France as it was now. Still, however, a fallacious hope remained, that it might be suffered to possess a sort of independence, and that it would become a barrier between France and the neighbouring continental powers. That hope was fled; and were we now to acknowledge a barrier against the other governments of Europe, instead of a barrier for their protection. The newly-assumed name "Italian," too, was a circumstance not unworthy of notice. It obviously glanced down upon Italy to the very foot. This suspicion was confirmed by a late proclamation of the Italian republic, in which it reminds its citizens of the glory of their ancestors, addresses them as if they were beginning a new career, and directs their views to new objects of ambition. There were

Digitized by Google

many other corroborating points on which he should not dilate; such as the letters sent to Switzerland, the gaining of the Valais, the formation of a new road for the purpose of opening a passage into Italy, and the changes now operating in Holland. Under these circumstances, he thought it right for us to use great caution. The crisis in which the country stood was unexampled. The period of its history that came nearest in resemblance to the present, was that of the treaty of Westphalia; and yet that was but a molehill to a mountain. Europe was now all broken down, and its proportions destroyed. Our situation required superhuman abilities, superhuman resolutions, superhuman energy and vigilance. It required superior talents beyond the most perilous of former times. It was that sort of situation which made it the interest of ministers rather to seek the advice and counsel of that House, and to avail themselves of the collected sense of a deliberative assembly, than to rely upon their own individual opinion, however great their judgment and sagacity. With this view of what our essential interest required, he thought the supplies should be taken for a longer time. This might be done by way of a vote of credit, by which the power would be granted, though it might not be necessary to put it in practice.

The *Attorney General* said:—It does indeed seem to me, that the manner in which this debate has been conducted leads to no useful conclusion; nor has it been held up by gentlemen on the other side to any sound parliamentary purpose. They say, that ministers have detected fraud on the part of the persons with whom they are negotiating, and that such conduct on the other side puts an end to the engagement on our part. That may be the sense these gentlemen entertain of the transactions; but if it be, they have a manly duty to discharge, namely, to move an address to his majesty, to recall from Amiens the minister who has so humiliated his country, as by this negotiation he thinks it has been humiliated. I think this mode of taking up the important subject by piece-meal, may be attended with serious inconveniences. Why these irregular discontents in this House, these loud complaints, without propositions to remove them, these expectorations, instead of clear expressions of discontent? Why not come forward in a manly manner, and afford the House an opportunity of manifesting its patriotic feeling upon the subject, by rejecting the motion, as I apprehend it would, and setting the matter at rest? Indeed, I do hope that this vicious practice of speaking, without intending to propose a practical conclusion, upon a subject so delicate as that of a pending negotiation, will be discontinued: it may increase to an enormous size of inconvenience by indulgence. It has been said, that we are now rejoicing that the fleet of France has got out of port, and that this is very inconsistent with our triumph at having kept them in their ports, as it were hermetically sealed up. I own I see none of the inconsistency which is imputed to us for feeling triumph at both these events. We are not now in the same situation that we were in when the fleet of France was blockaded in their ports. I do not mean to say that the sailing of that fleet to the West Indies may not be accompanied with some evils; but I say they are there to be met, if necessary; that the French fleet, should it attempt any thing hostile to our interests, is in a part of the world where we have nothing to fear. The House has no reason to believe that ministers will put up with any national indignity. If, in the course of this negotiation, we should be disappointed, it will be met with and resisted by a proper spirit. I look to ministers for no superhuman power. But whatever can be accomplished by integrity, by political knowledge, by zeal for the public welfare, I look for, and confidently trust to see effected by his majesty's ministers.

The several resolutions were then agreed to.

March 4. The report of the committee of supply, to whom the army estimates were referred, being brought up,

Mr. *Robson* proceeded to point out various heads of expenditure, which he said were highly improper, such as the barracks, the expenses of corn and hay for the horses of the cavalry, the coals and candles for the men, the expense of which he contended to be enormous. The sum charged for beer to the troops at the Isle of Wight, he said was also beyond his comprehension. He maintained that this mode of voting expenditure by months was dangerous; the sums coming thus by driblets, did not strike the imagination in the same manner as

Digitized by Google

they would do if the whole service of the year came before the public at once, and and that the more particularly, as money was raised by exchequer bills, to be hereafter provided for, instead of bringing out at once the budget of taxes for the year. He alleged that those things were most alarming, and the country was beginning to feel the effects of them. Gentlemen might fence themselves round with majorities; but the time would come when there must be an account given of the public money. The finances of the country were in so desperate a situation, that government was unable to discharge its bills; for a fact had come within his knowledge, of a bill accepted by government having been dishonoured—[A general exclamation of Hear! hear!].

Mr. *Dent* rose to call the hon. member to order. He thought he was extremely irregular in making an observation which tended to discredit the government.

The *Speaker* said, he would deliver his opinion on the subject, which the House would support and confirm, if right; if wrong, of course it would be discountenanced. His opinion was, that if a member of that House cast any reproach on the existing government of the country, under the general charge of insolvency, or otherwise to excite disesteem towards it, he was disorderly.

Mr. *Alexander* hoped the hon. member would, upon reflection, retract the injurious assertion he had just made.

Mr. *Robson* said, he was ready to go into evidence in his place to-morrow on this assertion. He thought it was a thing which had better not be investigated—it was an expression which came out in the warmth of speech. It was a thing better not inquired into; but surely he had a right to make use of a fact in support of his argument.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, if it was a thing which it were better not to inquire into, it was a thing which had better not have been said. The hon. gentleman had said it; he was bound to prove it, or to retract it. The House ought to expect of the hon. gentleman to state the precise fact to which he had alluded; to name a day on which he would bring it forward, and prove it; if he did not, the next step would be for the House to proceed to censure him for the use of such expression; for no man ought to make a heavy charge against government any more than individuals, and allege a fact for the basis of such charge, without being prepared to bring proof of such fact.

Mr. *Robson* said, that what he had uttered was in the warmth of argument. In adverting to the expenses of government, he illustrated that by stating, that one of the public offices had not paid its acceptances. Now, if any gentleman would move that a day be appointed for him to produce proof of the truth of his assertion, he would do it; but he would again repeat, that, in his opinion, the less was said the better.

The *Secretary at War* said, that as far as this declaration related to the hon. member, he believed the less was said about it the better; but that would not now do for the House. He should explain what the fact was of which he had spoken.

Mr. *Robson* said, he never asserted in that House that which he did not conceive to be true. It was true that a banker, a member of that House, did take an acceptance to a public office—the sum was small. The answer at that public office was, "that they had not money to pay it."

Mr. Chancellor *Addington*.—I am sure the House must feel, that it is important for the hon. gentleman to proceed and state the whole of what he knows on the subject he alludes to. It is due to the House; it is due to government. The credit of the country requires that this matter should be fully explained. I understand the hon. gentleman to allege, that government acceptances have been refused payment at a public office. I call on him to name the office at which the acceptance was tendered, and payment was refused.

Dr. *Laurence* thought it important that charges of this kind should be fully explained, retracted if false, or proved if true; but with regard to the proceeding of the House against the hon. member, in case he should eventually be found to have uttered that which was unfounded, as the words of the hon. member were not taken down at the time, and as what he had said came before the House incidentally, he doubted whether there could, consistently with order, be any proceeding in the House upon the matter; nor perhaps was there any necessity for it.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington*.—The hon. gentleman has created the necessity. He does not state it now as an inadvertency of

Digitized by Google

speech—an assertion hastily made; but one which, upon repeated application to him, he has adopted. He said he could prove it. We should be making a miserable use of the forms of the House, if we decided that they precluded us from calling on him to produce his proof.

Mr. *Robson* declared, he could prove what he had said. Having asserted the fact, he would support it: he maintained then, he maintained still, that an acceptance of a public office, was presented for payment, and refused—[Here there was a loud call of Name! name!"] Mr. Robson said, the Sick and Hurt office.

Mr. *Vansittart* desired the hon. gentleman to name the person who brought the acceptance.

Mr. *Dent* said, that the regular way would be to have the words taken down, for the purpose of affording to the House an opportunity of considering what proceeding it might adopt upon this business.

Mr. *Martin* said, that an acceptance of that office, in his hands, had been presented, and had met the fate described by the hon. member.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that the interposition of the speeches of other members, between the time of uttering the words and the proposition for recording them, had rendered the taking of them down now irregular, if not impracticable; but the sentence might be repeated, and the hon. gentleman might adopt it if he pleased. I understand, (said Mr. Addington), the hon. gentleman to say and abide by these words, "that government acceptances have been refused payment; that is to say, that a government acceptance, in the hands of a banker, a member of this House, was carried to the Sick and Hurt office, and that there payment was refused."

Mr. *Robson* said, that that was the substance of what he meant.

The resolutions were agreed to. After which,

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* called the attention of the House to the subject of the non-payment of the bill at the Sick and Hurt office. He said: I have not had an opportunity of inquiring, with minuteness, into the charge brought forward by the hon. gentleman; but I have received information with respect to the particular instance which he referred to, and which I think it material to state before the House separates. The House will recollect, that the hon. gentleman said, that government acceptances had been refused payment, and that under circumstances so general, as to mark the degraded state of government, and to prove its insolvency. I find that the amount of the bill accepted by government, and the non-payment of which was to denote the insolvency of government is 19*l.* 7*s.*! Whether or not the bill was paid, remains to be proved; but my information comes from the same source as the hon. member derives his accusation. At all events the instance of the hon. member of the insolvency of government is a bill of 19*l.* 7*s.*!

Mr. *Robson* said, that was so much the worse; as the bill was in the hands of a poor man who wanted the money.

March 8. Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, he hoped he might be allowed to advert to what had passed on Thursday evening. It would be in the recollection of the House, that an hon. gentleman had stated, that the government was insolvent, and that government acceptances had been refused payment at the public offices. This general assertion, however, and these plural terms, were only applied to one office, and to one bill, for the sum of 19*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* He was therefore entitled to say, that the hon. gentleman had no ground for the assertion that he made, except in that single instance. He was ready to admit, that the bill alluded to was presented, and was not paid; but such a circumstance was not peculiar to the present time, or such as the oldest in the public offices had never known before. He could assert, however, that there never was a single instance, in which the Treasury (and there the credit of government resided) had been applied to for money, or where money was wanted for the payment of a bill of exchange, that the application was disappointed. It had of late been the policy of government to prevent the inferior public offices from becoming banking shops, and accumulating large sums of money at any one time; but, in no one instance could it be stated, that money, being likely to be wanted for satisfying bills of exchange, had not been constantly ready.

Mr. *Robson* said, he had proofs of the fact he had asserted, to the amount of many thousands, and it was his intention to move to-morrow for papers relative to the subject.

Digitized by Google

March 9. Mr. Robson accordingly moved for an account of all bills drawn upon the Sick and Hurt office, with dates, when due, and when paid, from the 1st of September 1801. Upon this, the chancellor of the exchequer moved the order of the day; which, after some conversation, was agreed to.

Debate in the Commons on the American Treaty Bill.] March 5. On the order of the day, for the second reading of the bill to empower his majesty, for a time to be limited, to cause certain countervailing duties, granted by an act of the 37th of his majesty, intituled, "An Act for carrying into Execution the Treaty of Amity, Commence, and Navigation, concluded between his Majesty and the United States of America," to cease, or be suspended, under certain circumstances.

General *Gascoyne* said, that one of the greatest objections which he had to this bill was, that it would infringe upon the Navigation act, which, next to the great charter of our liberties, ought to be kept inviolate. It was to that act that we were indebted for the great navy which we possessed, and for our trade. But even if it were right to pass this bill, he thought that we ought to wait till after the definitive treaty, because then we should have to make commercial treaties with other powers; and it would be wise to wait till we knew the terms of the other treaties before we bound ourselves in this manner to America. It appeared to him, that, by taking off the countervailing duties with America, we should injure one great branch of our trade, he meant the carrying trade, in which America was our rival. This measure originated in America, for there was a bill brought in there to take off these duties; and if he had no other reason, that alone would induce him to doubt very much before he gave his assent to the measure. It was rather singular, that before a great commercial measure like the present was proposed to the House, it had not been proposed to the Board of Trade, or that a committee of the House had not been appointed to examine the subject. He was sure there was no man at all acquainted with the commercial interests of this country, who could view the trade which was carried on between America and our West India islands, without being convinced that it was highly injurious to this country, because it enabled the Americans to meet us upon the continent with the produce of our own colonies. In 1791, the number of vessels that cleared out from Great Britain for America were 245 British, and 218 foreign; but that in 1801, there were only 62 British ships cleared out, while the number of foreign vessels amounted to 507—so much had our carrying trade been decreased! This decrease must be attributed, in a great degree, to the war; but not altogether. There was one subject which appeared to him to deserve the serious attention of the House, and that was the trade in the article of salt. When salt was shipped in this country it was necessary to give bonds, which were not cancelled until a certificate was procured that the cargo was delivered at the port for which the vessel was cleared out; in America, no such difficulties were imposed. But he wished to know, if we repealed these countervailing duties, how we were sure that America would do the same? He was informed that a treaty had been concluded between France and America, by which the former agreed to let American ships enter her ports with the same advantages and privileges that French ships enjoyed; and when, in addition to this, he took into consideration the prohibition in Spain and Holland against British goods, it certainly was sufficient to excite considerable jealousy on our part, and to induce us to take care not to give any nation advantages which would enable her to enter into a competition with us. If we did give those advantages, we ought to be sure that the nation to whom we gave those advantages deserved such favour from us.

Mr. *Vansittart* said, that the hon. gentleman seemed to suppose, that by passing this bill, we were giving exclusive advantages to America; but that was not the case, for it would only put the navigation with America on the same footing with that of other nations. This was no infringement of the Navigation act. The hon. gentleman had stated, that we were on the point of entering into commercial treaties with other powers, and therefore we ought to wait till those treaties were before the House; but as the countervailing duties only related to America, he could not conceive what connexion it could have with our treaties with other powers. It had been said, that in consequence of a treaty between France and America, the vessels of the latter were to

Digitized by Google

be admitted into the ports of the former, upon as favourable terms as French vessels; but the treaty to which the hon. gentleman alluded had not been published in any authentic shape, therefore it was impossible to state, with correctness, what the terms of that treaty were. The hon. gentleman then stated, that America would, in consequence of this bill, have an advantage over us in the article of salt, on account of the bonds which it was necessary to give in this country; but the reason why these bonds were required was, that the vessels in which it was in general shipped were coasting vessels; and, if it were not for these bonds, the salt might be relanded and the revenue defrauded. The next subject upon which the hon. gentleman had commented was, the great increase of American shipping. This was a consideration that had nothing to do with the present bill; but if it had, it ought rather to induce the House to pass the bill, because it showed that the measures we had hitherto adopted, were inefficacious. It certainly appeared that the number of English vessels employed in the trade with America had decreased. In 1791, the number of British ships employed were 312, and of foreign 246; in 1792, there were 247 British, and 318 foreign; in 1793, there were 197 British, and 313 foreign. This decrease, taking place before the war, could not of course be attributed to it; but, after the war did take place, the decrease of British shipping was certainly more rapid. In 1798, the value of the British manufactures exported to America was 5,300,000*l.*; in 1799, it was 6,700,000*l.*, and in 1800, it was nearly the same. Now it should be recollected, that our exports to America were mostly British manufactures, and were for the consumption of America. The cheaper they could get these articles, the more they would consume of them; and, consequently, by taking off these duties, we were doing great service to our manufactures. On the other hand, our imports from America were not the manufactures of that country, nor were they in general for the consumption of this, but principally for re-exportation; therefore the effect of continuing these countervailing duties would be to force the Americans to take their produce at once to the other countries of Europe, instead of sending them first to England, and consequently our re-export trade would be ruined. But, he defended this bill on the grounds of national good faith and general policy. Soon after the conclusion of the American war, America endeavoured to crush the trade of England, and, in many instances, the duties upon English merchandize were three or four times greater than the duties upon the merchandize of France and other countries. But she soon found the inconvenience of this system; and one of the first steps of her legislature, after her constitution was formed, was to repeal these duties, and to impose others, which were equal upon all countries. It was true, that this bill had not been submitted to the Board of Trade; but he could say, that it had the approbation of those who, from their situation, were best able to judge upon the subject.

Dr. *Laurence* admitted, that, whatever might be the expediency or inexpediency of the measure, we must adopt it, if we were bound to do so by good faith. It had been said, in defence of this measure, that we were bound by treaty to take off these duties, if they were taken off in America. The stipulations of a treaty must undoubtedly be adhered to; but this was not the proper mode of taking off these duties. The bill stated that it was necessary, for certain circumstances, to take off these duties; but it did not particularize any one of these circumstances. If, however, this measure was necessary, he thought it would be better to bring it forward upon its own grounds, and that a bill of a very different nature should be proposed. It certainly was a most serious consideration, that the shipping of America had increased so much. During the American war, her shipping was nearly annihilated, and it was now as great as the shipping of Great Britain was at the conclusion of that war. All the effects of our Navigation act, and all the care we had taken during a period of above a century, had only made our shipping equal to that which America had created in a few years. It had been stated, that the taking off these duties would make this country a *depôt* for the merchandize of America; but he deprecated this plan of making a distinction between our mercantile interest and our Navigation act. There was one point which called for the attention of parliament, and that was the great increase of the American trade with the East Indies. There had been a decision in the courts of this country which certainly tended to encourage this trade; he

Digitized by Google

meant the case of Wilson and Marriot; and there were now above 300 American ships employed in trading to the East Indies. It was a notorious fact, that it was the plan of the French government, when the war of arms was over, to carry on a war of Custom-house duties with us, and, if possible, to ruin our trade. This certainly called for the most serious attention of the government. This appeared from a pamphlet published by a person of considerable consequence in the French government, for he was under secretary of state to M. Talleyrand. This book completely developed the plan of the French government to ruin our commerce. The principles laid down in this book were such as France had uniformly acted upon. All these circumstances ought to make us extremely watchful. He hoped that some plan of commercial intercourse between this country and France would be established before the definitive treaty was signed; because he was sure that after that treaty, we should not succeed in establishing one.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that no man was more disposed than himself to give the highest praise to the Navigation act: he considered it as the foundation of the commercial prosperity of this country; but how did the bill trench upon the provisions of that act? What was the simple state of the case? The Americans had thought fit to impose a duty upon the tonnage of British ships, and upon the cargoes of all vessels coming into their ports, which were not American, for the purpose of benefiting their own navigation. When the commercial treaty was negotiated between the two countries, it was expressly stipulated that no fresh duties should be imposed; but, as the United States refused to give up the old duties, this country could not suffer those duties to remain without imposing countervailing duties. He should have thought it a matter of course, without any treaty between the two countries, if the United States withdrew their duties, that we should also discontinue ours. He submitted, therefore, whether it was not just and expedient to pass an act, the object of which was merely to give his majesty power, under certain circumstances, to suspend the countervailing duties? Such a measure was required by good faith, as the communication of the American duties being taken off might arrive when parliament was not sitting; while, at the same time, the continuance of the countervailing duties, after such a communication, would be a breach of the treaty. Taking it, however, upon the ground of expediency alone, was it not equally advantageous, that the duties on both sides should cease? It was always better that two countries should be in a simple state of communication with each other, than under the influence of a complicated system of duties. There was also another consideration of policy: great part of the produce of America was deposited in this country, from whence it was exported to other parts of the world; if countervailing duties were suffered to exist here, we gave an advantage to Holland and to other countries, where no such duties existed, and where, consequently, much of the produce of America would be deposited in preference to this country. The learned gentleman had said, that it was the policy of France to destroy the effect of our Navigation act. This might be very true. It was somewhat singular, however, that the learned gentleman should now so freely recommend such bold and determined measures in support of that act, who had not long since endeavoured to induce the House to abandon the principles of that very act. But if there was a war against our commerce, it was no reason why we should not pass a bill founded upon a principle of liberal conciliation, or why we should not, in a liberal, fair, and open manner, conciliate any great and powerful state for the benefit of our commerce, where that conciliation was attended by no humiliation on our part. It might be the policy of other states to destroy the commerce of Great Britain; but how were they to do it? Our manufactures, during the late war, had found their way into all the ports of Europe, in spite of every prohibition; and the exports of British manufactures were, during that period, nearly doubled. America, after the war between her and this country, imposed prohibitory duties on British goods; but British manufactures were exported thither in a greater proportion than before the war, in spite of every prohibition. When a commercial treaty took place between France and Russia, at the period of the armed neutrality, impediments were thrown in the way of the commerce of this country; but, in spite of these, France was compelled to purchase Russian produce in the markets of this country. This showed that all prohibitions

Digitized by Google

upon our commerce were completely nugatory. Our commerce was founded upon the firm basis of capital and confidence. In capital, Great Britain was rivalled by no country; but still more important was the confidence to which the honour and punctuality of her merchants entitled her. The only country which had been enabled to rival us was Holland, who founded her commerce upon a similar honesty and punctuality. What was the reason that France had never been able to rival us in in our commerce? Because, from the very nature of the French character, there was not that system of honesty, of punctuality, and justice in her dealings, which could entitle her to the confidence of other countries. To the honesty and punctuality of our dealings was to be added the liberality by which our commercial transactions were characterized, and by which we had been enabled to outstrip the only country which had in any degree rivalled us. Let Britons trust to themselves, and they had nothing to fear.

Mr. Windham said, he had no doubt that they ought to take off these countervailing duties; the only question was as to the time, and whether it was proper to pass an act to take them off before it was known that the duties in America had been abolished. His learned friend had mentioned a design on the part of France, to destroy our commerce during a period of peace; the noble lord refused to give any credit to a prophecy of the destruction of our commerce during peace, because it had been prophesied that war would destroy our commerce, and that prophecy had proved erroneous. That might be an argument against believing any prophecy, or it might be urged against giving credit to the same set of men, who, upon the same principle, prophesied the destruction of our commerce equally by war and by peace; but surely to contend, because one set of men prophesied the destruction of our commerce by war, and were mistaken, that therefore another set of men, who, upon a different principle, prophesied the destruction of our commerce by peace, were entitled to no credit, was not very logical. The noble lord had said, that our commerce had found its way into all the ports of Europe, in spite of every prohibition; but this assertion might only extend to a certain degree; it did not follow, that, because our goods found their way into these ports, or were even landed, they might not be stopped by some inland prohibition. That France showed a disposition to destroy the commerce of this country, was so evident, that it was a kind of comic extravagance to doubt it. They told us they would do it, and showed us how they would do it; but yet we said we could not believe it—it must be a joke. We had now to contend against a power which had not been seen since the time of Charlemagne. It did not appear to him that capital and confidence were sufficient to enable us to contend against this enormous power; to them must be added the great maritime strength of the country; to them must be added, the proud independence and manly spirit of the country; to them must be added, that high sense of honour which was not prone to submit to degradation or to insult. He would agree as to the value of capital and confidence, of honesty and punctuality; but he must also be allowed to set a value upon the arms of the country. Before this country possessed capital or commerce, she made a figure in arms; but now it seemed to be an opinion with many, that when our navy was up, we might go to bed. He hoped that a sense of the danger which threatened us would rouse the people to those exertions which were necessary to guard them against designs by which we were to be destroyed. When his noble friend talked of capital and wealth, he begged gentlemen to consider what capital and wealth had done, or what it would do. We could not judge in this case from anterior events, we were in a situation wholly dissimilar to any former situation in which we had been placed, and to which no principle drawn from former events would apply. Our present situation must be judged of from its own circumstances, and could not be considered in any point of view derived from former experience.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that every part of the public service repudiated and falsified the supposition, that a commercial and a wealthy country could not preserve its advantages over other states by uniting military excellence with its superior wealth. This country was happily a splendid instance of both. His right hon. friend had dwelt on a topic which no lover of his country could contemplate without apprehension—he meant the power of France. This was a

Digitized by Google

power which he had never endeavoured to under-rate; but he trusted there was nothing to be dreaded from that power, when compared with our own. He did not seek for a counterpoise to the power of France merely in the wealth of Great Britain, but in the *animus* of the people; and under all exigencies, that spirit would be the true conservator of its power, and protector of its dominion. Were it not for that spirit, he should indeed look upon France as a Colossus; independent of such a spirit, we should be miserable indeed; but with it, we had nothing to fear. His right hon. friend seemed chiefly to object to the time of bringing this subject forward. He stated it as partaking rather too much of that conciliatory spirit which might be injurious if carried to too great an extent. He seemed to suppose it a gratuitous measure on our part to adopt the principle of the bill. This was a misapprehension of the fact. The principle of the bill originated with the American government. It was in consequence of an application made on the part of the government of that country, that the measure now before the House was brought forward. It had been stated also, that the principle of this bill was hostile to the navigation laws of this country, which it certainly was not. It had been asked also, what benefit would be derived from the measure? To which he answered, it was a benefit to the export trade, and it was a benefit also to us, in preserving the advantages and profits of the trade, arising from consignments and deposits. But independent of this, there was the obligation of the treaty of 1795 which left us no alternative: besides, without such a measure as this, the real understanding between this country and America could never be carried into effect; for the system of countervailing duties could never operate as an equivalent. It had been said by his right hon. friend, that we calculated precipitately on the probability of our continuing to preserve the same advantages in commerce during peace, as we possessed in war; and he had said, that the commerce of Great Britain would be excluded, if possible, from the greater part of Europe. That such, indeed, might be the disposition, he could easily conceive; but it was not a disposition which was peculiar to a state of peace; every exertion had been made to give it effect, all over Europe, during the whole war. We had been excluded, as far as the power of the enemy could go, and yet notwithstanding all the ravages of war, which must have diminished considerably the demands for many of our articles of trade, British commerce had found its way every where: and was now in extent very little short of what it was at the commencement of hostilities. But there was another point in which to view this subject, and that was, the commerce which we must, at all events, have from our East India possessions, and, by this measure, from America. What, then, was there in peace that was likely to abridge these two great sources of commerce and revenue? But, supposing the spirit of exclusion greater in peace than in war, he did not therefore see any reason for not adopting the measure now before the House; on the contrary, it rather increased the obligation to adopt it, as being the means of increasing our commerce and revenues, and giving us radical advantages which it would not be in the power of France to interrupt.

Mr. *Nicholls* applauded the wisdom of ministers in coming to parliament with a measure, the effect of which would be to draw into a closer connection this country and America; a policy of the soundest kind.

Debate in the Commons on the State of the Corn Trade between Great Britain and Ireland.] March 16. Mr. Chancellor *Addington* rose to move for a committee to inquire into the state of the corn trade between Great Britain and Ireland. In making regulations upon this subject, it appeared to him that there ought to be a free intercourse between the two countries; that they should have the means of administering to each other's wants; that the deficiency existing in some parts might be supplied by the abundance which existed in others; and that if it were necessary to impose any restrictions, they ought to be of a general, and not of a partial nature. In regulating the concerns of England and Wales, when the latter country was annexed to England, the great object of our ancestors was, to identify the two countries. The same policy was adopted at the period of the union between England and Scotland; and it must be the wish of every man, that the same policy should prevail between Great Britain and Ireland. The

Digitized by Google

fact was, that in the article of corn, there was a prodigious difference between the two countries. There were many instances in which the price of grain in Ireland had been nearly double the price of the same sort of grain in Great Britain; and this had arisen from the operation of laws which had been thought wise and expedient when they were adopted. They were enacted at a time when Ireland was a separate kingdom, and when it was of great importance for the legislature of that country to give every facility to cultivation. By these laws, the export price of wheat was fixed at 45*s.* a quarter; of rice and barley, 23*s.* a quarter; and oats, 15*s.* 9*d.* a quarter. But he contended, that, even if Ireland were now a separate kingdom, these prices ought not to continue. They were fixed under very different circumstances, and when the prices of grain were much lower than they now were; and therefore, even if the union had not taken place, some alteration ought to be made in them. He knew how difficult it was, upon such a subject as this, to make a great change, by the immediate adoption of a new principle, however incontestable the wisdom of it might be. Upon general principles, it would be wise to get rid of all distinctions respecting corn between Great Britain and Ireland, as had been done in the case of Scotland; and that no more distinction ought to subsist between them than between any two counties of Great Britain. There were, however, independent of the prejudices which must prevail upon such a subject, some circumstances peculiar to Ireland, which are entitled to consideration. It might be apprehended, that, in the event of a pressure from a scarcity, the capital of England would draw a great proportion of the grain from Ireland. There was also another circumstance that deserved to be considered; which was, that the means provided in this country for the relief of the poor did not subsist in Ireland, there being no poor-rate there; therefore it would be necessary to move cautiously upon a subject which might be supposed, in some instances, to prevent the poor of Ireland from getting their food at reasonable prices. There being no poor-rate in Ireland, the labourer had nothing to depend upon but his own earnings, and the liberality and benevolence of his neighbours. At the same time, he could not help saying, that there must have been a degree of prejudice in entertaining the idea that the facility of exportation of corn from Ireland into this country would be injurious to the people of Ireland, because no consequence of the act of union operated as a restraint on the exportation of spirits from Ireland to this country; and therefore, if corn was brought here in the shape of spirits, to any amount, the effect was the same, at least as to the quantity of grain used in such amount, as if it came in kind. Under this impression of the subject, what he wished was, to raise the export price, so as to enable the owner in Ireland to send, and this part of the united kingdom to receive from thence grain, in like manner as from any part of the continent. The lowest price at which, at present, corn could be received into this country was, wheat 54*s.* barley 28*s.* and oats 28*s.* per quarter. He should hope the House would be of opinion, that it would be an encouragement to cultivation in Ireland, to enable one part of the empire to obtain from the other, the means of subsistence with more facility; for this purpose, he thought the better course would be to raise the price at which it should be allowable to export from Ireland to England grain of all denominations. The principle on which he proposed this, had already been carried into effect for the benefit of the distillers. The trade of the West India merchants called for the adoption of this measure; but, above all, it was matter of the highest importance to enable Great Britain to traffic with herself in the article of corn (for to traffic with Ireland now, was to traffic with herself), instead of resorting to the continent. He should now move, "That a Committee be appointed to consider of the State of the Corn Trade between Great Britain and Ireland; and report the same, with their observations thereupon, to the House."

Mr. *Foster* declared his approbation of the measure. It was the true interest of the empire at large, to bring the two parts of the kingdom into one, and to make them as if they were only two counties, in regard to the trade in corn at least. He believed it was the sincere wish in Ireland, that every obstacle to the plan of making the two parts of the kingdom one in respect of this trade, should be removed; that it should be made as it were a mere coasting trade. However, while he said this, he could not help observing, that the laws of Ireland, upon this subject, had continued uniform from

Digitized by Google

the year 1784. By the bill which then passed upon this subject, Ireland was bound to allow the exportation of its corn into this country, leaving it to this country to fix the price at which that exportation should take place. The British parliament had the power of fixing the price, and Ireland was bound to allow the exportation accordingly. That law had been continued in force for seventeen years, and had always been approved of. He therefore believed that the proposed measure would meet with general concurrence in Ireland. Having said this, he thought it might not be improper to submit, whether it might not be better to instruct the committee to take into consideration the corn laws at large. The corn laws of Ireland had the advantage of those of this country, and under those laws the agriculture of Ireland had greatly thriven. He was sorry to say, that, in this country, the laws in this respect had been inferior in policy to those of Ireland; for, ever since the year 1767, the laws of Great Britain had been an endeavour sometimes to regulate the trade of the corn-factor. at others to regulate capriciously the trade of exportation, at others importation; the whole of it making up a discouraging uncertainty; and therefore it was no wonder that the agriculture of the country had declined under the impression of it. There was one point which he could not pass over unnoticed: in Ireland, the regulation was made to operate uniformly on the whole of the country. In England, we had sixteen districts, and distinct regulations to each; so that we might be exporting corn at one part of the kingdom, while we were importing it at another; the evils of which were many. There should be a free participation between the two countries; we should make one standard for both. Ireland should be taught that she would be safe in opening her trade to this country; and we should be secured here against any apprehension of inconvenience from that species of encouragement to Ireland. When this system was well digested and put in practice, this country would never want grain, while Ireland had any to send.

Sir *W. Pulteney* said, that there had been a continual variation in the law on this subject; a thing much to be lamented. From the time of king William, there was no change in the corn laws until the year 1757, when there was an alarm of scarcity, and those laws were thrown open. This had introduced a practice of endeavouring, from time to time, to make provisions according to some temporary exigency, which had introduced into the law an uncertainty that had a grievous effect; for the farmer never knew exactly what to look forward to as the law to guide him. He was very glad the country had been called upon to observe the contrast between the laws of England and of Ireland in this particular.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, he was ready to admit, that the general law of the empire upon this subject required revision; that there ought to be a general plan for the purpose of preventing occasional acts of parliament upon some temporary, or perhaps local, inconvenience; for such interferences of the legislature had been proved to be injurious. A right hon. gentleman had observed, that under the laws of Ireland the agriculture of Ireland had improved; while under the laws of England, the agriculture of England had declined. But, he appealed to the House, whether, notwithstanding the inconveniences, arising from the fluctuation of the law upon this subject, whether the agriculture of this country, so far from declining, had not within the last ten years, improved more than it ever had done in the same time? It was impossible to look at facts, without coming to that conclusion. It might be matter of curiosity to inquire why, if the agriculture of the country had so increased, England had, for the last thirty years, been an importing country with respect to corn, when it was known that, for the preceding part of the century, she was an exporting country. That might be ascribed to the influx of population and of wealth, and their attendant, luxury; by which wheat had come into common consumption in England, over every part of it, or nearly so. On the comparison between Great Britain and Ireland, it should be observed, that wheat was not the common food of man in Ireland. In his opinion, the two countries should be put, with all speed possible, on the same footing in agriculture. He was persuaded that, until that could be done, the entire advantages of the union could not be enjoyed.

The motion was then agreed to.

Mr. Fox's Motion for a New Writ for Tavistock—Character of the Duke of Bedford.] March 16. Mr. *Fox* rose and

Digitized by Google

spoke nearly as follows:*—If the sad event which has recently occurred were only a private misfortune, however heavy, I should feel the impropriety of obtruding upon the House the feelings of private friendship, and would have sought some other opportunity of expressing those sentiments of gratitude and affection, which must be ever due from me to the memory of the excellent person, whose loss gives occasion to the sort of motion of course which I am about to make to the House. It is because I consider the death of the duke of Bedford as a great public calamity, because the public itself seems to consider it; because, not in this town only, but in every part of the kingdom, the impression made by it seems to be the strongest, and most universal, that ever appeared upon the loss of a subject; it is for these reasons that I presume to hope for the indulgence of the House, if I deviate, in some degree, from the common course, and introduce my motion in a manner which I must confess to be unusual on similar occasions.

At the same time, I trust, Sir, that I shall not be suspected of any intention to abuse the indulgence which I ask, by dwelling, with the fondness of friendship, upon the various excellencies of the character to which I have alluded, much less by entering into a history of the several events of his life which might serve to illustrate it. There was something in that character so peculiar and striking, and the just admiration which his virtues commanded was such, that to expatiate upon them in any detail is as unnecessary as, upon this occasion, it would be improper. That he has been much lamented and generally, cannot be wondered at, for surely there never was a more just occasion of public sorrow. To lose such a man!—at such a time!—so unexpectedly!—The particular stage of his life too in which we lost him, must add to every feeling of regret, and make the disappointment more severe and poignant to all thinking minds. Had he fallen at an earlier period, the public, to whom he could then (comparatively speaking at least) be but little known, would rather have compassionated and condoled with the feelings of his friends and relations, than have been themselves very severely afflicted by the loss. It would have been suggested, and even we who were the most partial must have admitted, that the expectations raised by the dawn are not always realized in the meridian of life. If the fatal event had been postponed, the calamity might have been alleviated by the consideration, that mankind could not have looked forward for any length of time to the exercises of his virtues and talents. But he was snatched away at a moment when society might have been expected to be long benefited by his benevolence, his energy, and his wisdom; when we had obtained a full certainty that the progress of his life would be more than answerable to the brightest hopes conceived from its outset; and when it might have been reasonably hoped, that, after having accomplished all the good of which it was capable, he would have descended not immaturely into the tomb. He had, on the one hand, lived long enough to have his character fully confirmed and established, while, on the other, what remained of life seemed, according to all human expectations, to afford ample space and scope for the exercise of the virtues of which that character was composed. The tree was old enough to enable us to ascertain the quality of the fruit which it would bear, and, at the same time, young enough to promise many years of produce.

The high rank and splendid fortune of the great man of whom I am speaking, though not circumstances which in themselves either can or ought to conciliate the regard and esteem of rational minds, are yet in so far considerable as an elevated situation, by making him who is so placed in it more powerful and conspicuous, causes his virtues or vices to be more useful or injurious to society. In this case, the rank and wealth of the person are to be attended to in another and a very different point of view. To appreciate his merits justly, we must consider not only the advantages, but the disadvantages, connected with such circumstances. The dangers attending prosperity in general, and high situations in particular, the corrupting influence of flattery, to which men in such situations are more peculiarly exposed, have been the theme of moralists in all ages, and in all nations; but how are these dangers increased with

* This speech was printed in the Monthly Magazine for April 1802, from Mr. Fox's own manuscript. On presenting it to the proprietor of that publication, Mr. Fox observed, "that he had never before attempted to make a copy of any speech which he had delivered in public."

Digitized by Google

respect to him who succeeds in his childhood to the first rank and fortune in a kingdom, such as this, and who, having lost his parents, is never approached by any being who is not represented to him as in some degree his inferior! Unless blessed with a heart uncommonly susceptible and disposed to virtue, how should he, who had scarce ever seen an equal have a common feeling and a just sympathy for the rest of mankind, who seem to have been formed rather for him, and as instruments of his gratification, than together with him for the general purposes of nature? Justly has the Roman satirist remarked,

Rarus enim fermè sensus communis in illâ Fortunâ.——

This was precisely the case of the duke of Bedford, nor do I know that his education was perfectly exempt from the defects usually belonging to such situations; but virtue found her own way, and on the very side where the danger was the greatest, was her triumph most complete. From the blame of selfishness no man was ever so eminently free. No man put his own gratification so low, that of others so high, in his estimation. To contribute to the welfare of his fellow-citizens was the constant pursuit of his life, by his example and his beneficence to render them better, wiser, and happier. He truly loved the public; but not only the public, according to the usual acceptation of the word; not merely the body corporate (if I may so express myself), which bears that name, but man in his individual capacity; all who came within his notice and deserved his protection, were objects of his generous concern. From his station, the sphere of his acquaintance was larger than that of most other men; yet in this extended circle, few, very few, could be counted to whom he had not found some occasion to be serviceable. To be useful, whether to the public at large, whether to his relations and nearer friends, or even to an individual of his species, was the ruling passion of his life.

He died, it is true, in a state of celibacy; but if they may be called a man's children whose concerns are as dear to him as his own—to protect whom from evil is the daily object of his care—to promote whose welfare he exerts every faculty of which he is possessed; if such, I say, are to be esteemed our children, no man had ever a more numerous family than the duke of Bedford.

Private friendships are not, I own, a fit topic for this House, or any public assembly; but it is difficult for any one who had the honour and happiness to be his friend, not to advert (when speaking of such a man) to his conduct and behaviour in that interesting character. In his friendship, not only was he disinterested and sincere, but in him were to be found united all the characteristic excellencies which have ever distinguished the men most renowned for that most amiable of all virtues. Some are warm, but volatile and inconstant; he was warm too, but steady and unchangeable. Never once was he known to violate any of the duties of that sacred relation. Where his attachment was placed, there it remained, or rather there it grew; for it may be more truly said of this man than of any other that ever existed, that if he loved you at the beginning of the year, and you did nothing to forfeit his esteem, he would love you still more at the end of it. Such was the uniformly progressive state of his affections, no less than of his virtue and wisdom.

It has happened to many, and he was certainly one of the number, to grow wiser as they advanced in years. Some have even improved in virtue; but it has generally been in that class of virtues only which consists in resisting the allurements of vice; and too often have these advantages been counterbalanced by the loss, or at least the diminution, of that openness of heart, that warmth of feeling, that readiness of sympathy, that generosity of spirit, which have been reckoned among the characteristic attributes of youth. In his case it was far otherwise; endued by nature with an unexampled firmness of character, he could bring his mind to a more complete state of discipline than any man I ever knew. But he had at the same time, such a comprehensive and just view of all moral questions, that he well knew to distinguish between those inclinations which, if indulged, must be pernicious, and the feelings which, if cultivated, might prove beneficial to mankind. All bad propensities, therefore, if any such he had, he completely conquered and suppressed, while, on the other hand, no man ever studied the trade by which he was to get his bread—the profession by which he hoped to rise to wealth and honour—nor even the higher arts of poetry or eloquence, in pursuit of a fancied immortality, with more zeal and ardour than this

Digitized by Google

excellent person cultivated the noble art of doing good to his fellow creatures. In this pursuit, above all others, diligence is sure of success, and accordingly it would be difficult to find an example of any other man to whom so many individuals are indebted for happiness or comfort, or to whom the public at large owe more essential obligation.

So far was he from slackening or growing cold in these generous pursuits, that the only danger was, lest, notwithstanding his admirable good sense, and that remarkable soberness of character which distinguished him, his munificence might, if he had lived, have engaged him in expenses to which even his princely fortune would have been found inadequate. Thus, the only circumstance like a failing in this great character was, that, while indulging his darling passion for making himself useful to others, he might be too regardless of future consequences to himself and to his family. The love of utility was indeed his darling, his ruling passion. Even in his recreations (and he was by no means naturally averse to such as were suitable to his station in life), no less than in his graver hours, he so much loved to keep this grand object in view, that he seemed, by degrees, to grow weary of every amusement which was not in some degree connected with it. Agriculture he judged rightly to be the most useful of all sciences, and, more particularly in the present state of affairs, he conceived it to be the department in which his services to his country might be most beneficial. To agriculture, therefore, he principally applied himself; nor can it be doubted, but, with his great capacity, activity, and energy, he must have attained his object, and made himself eminently useful in that most important branch of political economy. Of the particular degree of his merit in this respect, how much the public is already indebted to him—how much benefit it may still expect to derive from the effects of his unwearied diligence and splendid example, many members of this House can form a much more accurate judgment than I can pretend to. But of his motive to these exertions I am competent to judge, and can affirm, without a doubt, that it was the same which actuated him throughout—an ardent desire to employ his faculties in the way, whatever it might be, in which he could most contribute to the good of his country, and the general interests of mankind.

With regard to his politics, I feel a great unwillingness to be wholly silent on the subject; and at the same time much difficulty in treating it with propriety, when I consider to whom I am addressing myself. I am sensible that those principles upon which, in any other place, I should not hesitate to pronounce an unqualified eulogium, may be thought by some, perhaps by the majority of this House, rather to stand in need of apology and exculpation, than to form a proper subject for panegyric. But, even in this view, I may be allowed to offer a few words in favour of my departed friend. I believe few, if any of us, are so infatuated with the extreme notions of philosophy as not to feel a partial veneration for the principles, some leaning even to the prejudices of the ancestors, especially if they were of any note, from whom we are respectively descended. Such biasses are always, as I suspect, favourable to the cause of patriotism and public virtue. I am sure, at least, that in Athens and Rome they were so considered. No man had ever less of family pride, in the bad sense, than the duke of Bedford; but he had a great and just respect for his ancestors. Now if, upon the principle to which I have alluded, it was in Rome thought excusable in one of the Claudii to have, in conformity with the general manners of their race, something too much of an aristocratical pride and haughtiness, surely in this country it is not unpardonable in a Russell to be zealously attached to the rights of the subject, and peculiarly tenacious of the popular parts of the constitution. It is excusable, at least, in one who numbers among his ancestors the great earl of Bedford, the patron of Pym, and the friend of Hampden, to be an enthusiastic lover of liberty; nor is it to be wondered at if a descendant of lord Russell should feel more than common horror for arbitrary power, and a quick, perhaps even a jealous discernment of any approach or tendency in the system of government to that dreaded evil. But whatever may be our differences in regard to principles, I trust there is no member of this House who is not liberal enough to do justice to upright conduct, even in a political adversary. Whatever, therefore, may be thought of those principles to which I have alluded, the political conduct of my much lamented friend must be allowed by all to have been manly, consistent, and sincere.

Digitized by Google

It now remains for me to touch upon the last melancholy scene in which this excellent man was to be exhibited; and to all those who admire his character, let it be some consolation that his death was in every respect conformable to his life. I have already noticed, that prosperity could not corrupt him. He had now to undergo a trial of an opposite nature. But in every instance he was alike true to his character; and in moments of extreme bodily pain and approaching dissolution, when it might be expected that a man's every feeling would be concentrated in his personal sufferings—his every thought occupied by the awful event impending—even in these moments, he put by all selfish considerations; kindness to his friends was the sentiment still uppermost in his mind; and he employed himself, to the last hour of his life, in making the most considerate arrangements for the happiness and comfort of those who were to survive him. While in the enjoyment of prosperity, he had learned and practised all those milder virtues which adversity alone is supposed capable of teaching; and, in the hour of pain and approaching death, he had that calmness and serenity which are thought to belong exclusively to health of body, and a mind at ease.

If I have taken an unusual, and possibly an irregular course upon this extraordinary occasion, I am confident the House will pardon me. They will forgive something, no doubt, to the warmth of private friendship—to sentiments of gratitude, which I must feel, and whenever I have an opportunity, must express to the latest hour of my life. But the consideration of public utility, to which I have so much adverted as the ruling principle in the mind of my friend, will weigh far more with them. They will in their wisdom acknowledge, that to celebrate and perpetuate the memory of great and meritorious individuals, is in effect an essential service to the community. It was not therefore, for the purpose of performing the pious office of friendship, by fondly strewing flowers upon his tomb, that I have drawn your attention to the character of the duke of Bedford: the motive that actuates me, is one more suitable to what were his views. It is, that this great character may be strongly impressed upon the minds of all who hear me—that they may see it—that they may feel it—that they may discourse of it in their domestic circles—that they may speak of it to their children, and hold it up to the imitation of posterity. If he could now be sensible to what passes here below—sure I am, that nothing could give him so much satisfaction as to find that we are endeavouring to make his memory an example, as he took care his life should be—useful to mankind.

I will conclude, with applying to the present occasion, a beautiful passage from the speech of a very young orator.* It may be thought, perhaps, to savour too much of the sanguine views of youth, to stand the test of a rigid philosophical inquiry; but it is at least cheering and consolatory, and that in this instance it may be exemplified, is, I am confident, the sincere wish of every man who hears me. "Crime," says he, "is a curse only to the period in which it is successful; but virtue, whether fortunate or otherwise, blesses not only its own age, but remotest posterity, and is as beneficial by its example, as by its immediate effects."—Mr. Fox then moved, "That Mr. Speaker do issue his warrant to the clerk of the crown, to make out a new writ, for the electing of a burgess to serve in this present parliament, for the borough of Tavistock, in the county of Devon, in the room of the right hon. John Russell, commonly called lord John Russell, now duke of Bedford, called up to the House of Peers."—Ordered.

Debate in the Commons on the Arrears of the Civil List.] March 29. The House having resolved itself into a committee of supply, to which the Report, &c. respecting the Civil List were referred,

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said:—Sir, before I proceed to enter into the particulars of the report now on the table, or to refer more minutely to his majesty's most gracious message, upon which it is my intention to propose a resolution, I trust the House, in a committee, will approve of not resting it on the mere feelings, honourable as they are, of affection and attachment to his majesty, but on those combined considerations which cannot fail to make the most forcible appeal to

* Essay on the Progressive Improvements of Mankind; an oration delivered in the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, December 17, 1798, by the Honourable William Lamb.

Digitized by Google

the generosity, the justice, and the wisdom of the House. Before I enter upon these topics, I am desirous of being indulged with the attention of the committee while I advert to another part of the question, which appears to me necessary to be first stated to the committee. I cannot, Sir, but derive the greatest satisfaction from the consideration of our being now in that state in which we are enabled to contemplate a question deeply interesting to the subjects of this country in a way that affords the most ample room for discussion: we have now on the table of the House of Commons a report, containing all the information which it was possible for the various offices connected with his majesty's civil list to furnish, and certainly all that can be necessary to enable the House to come to a full examination of this subject. I derive the greater satisfaction from the circumstance of the report being on the table, inasmuch as the House will have, what it never has had before, a plain, clear, and satisfactory statement of what really are the charges and expenses of his majesty's civil list. The report will also furnish a complete answer to the observations and comments of ignorant and disaffected persons. It will appear that a very inconsiderable portion indeed, when compared with the statements which have been made, is applied to the personal use and enjoyment of his majesty. I rejoice that we have a document which will put all doubt at rest. I trust that the report will have the effect of disposing, not gentlemen of this House, for they are above giving way to such injurious suppositions, but those persons who have been misled by ignorance, to look into their errors, and to become desirous of correcting them. I hope it will no longer be stated, after the report shall have been gone into, that his majesty enjoys advantages arising from income of revenue beyond those of his illustrious predecessors. I wish to call the attention of the committee to the circumstances which attended the kings of this country in past times. Let us recollect what possessions, applicable as sources of revenue, were enjoyed by the sovereigns of this country in former times, and then consider what is the amount of the civil-list establishment, which some have invidiously contrasted with those revenues. The sources of revenue anciently enjoyed by the kings of England, not only were calculated to fill the coffers of the monarchs who possessed them, but also to enable them to oppress their subjects; for when their revenues were in their own hands, they had the less occasion to apply to this House, and parliament consequently had but seldom the opportunity of exercising that invaluable privilege which can alone insure our safety—the privilege of imposing a restraint on the abuses of the executive government of the country. His majesty on the throne had not the power of applying any part of his revenue to his own purposes, either in a manner offensive to the people of the country, or for purposes of prodigality and corruption: it was only, Sir, in the commencement of the reign of Charles 2nd that estimates were introduced as means of control on the expenditure of the public revenue. It was in the time of Charles 2nd that the right of purveyance and pre-emption was given up as a source of enriching the king; for the purpose of relieving the people of this country from a prerogative so injurious, a price was to be paid for it by parliament: in consequence of which an hereditary revenue was granted in lieu of it I mention this rather incidentally, the main purpose being to establish the point that the whole of the king's hereditary revenue consists of the grant to Charles 2nd for the abolition of the court of wards, and the privilege of purveyance and pre-emption. That there was a disposition to throw into the lap of the two succeeding kings a considerable part of the revenue of the country, I allow; and at the commencement of the reign of William 3rd, it was submitted to parliament, whether his majesty, *jure coronæ*, was in the situation which entitled him to that revenue which had belonged to the people of England. The Commons happily abstained from coming to a decision. I say happily, for it was perhaps the cause of a very large portion of the land of the country finding its way to the possession of the subjects. Parliament, having refused to say whether the king, *jure coronæ*, was entitled to the revenue of his predecessors, proceeded to establish a civil list. They gave to king William an annual civil list, at the same time endeavouring to ascertain what were the expenses of the household and establishment of his majesty. I am as inclined as any one can be to adopt the opinion expressed by an hon. gentleman in this House on a former night, that if a civil list is granted,

Digitized by Google

it should be rendered permanent; but I am also persuaded that the principle cannot be uniformly applied. The very purpose for which a civil list is granted, implies the impossibility of its being absolutely permanent. It is granted for the purpose of the splendor of the crown, and the dignity of the executive government; and in the course of a long reign, circumstances must occur in which its expenses must necessarily be increased or diminished. The rapid increase of the wealth, and the extension of the commerce of the country, have hitherto prevented any decrease in the expenses of the civil list; and I have no hesitation in saying, they have justified the augmentation which has been made to it. In 1697 we find a civil list establishment was first permanently settled, and the aggregate of it was at that time 680,000*l.* At the accession of queen Anne it was 700,000*l.*; in fact, the amount of it was near 900,000*l.*; but it was charged with the payment of debts, by which it was reduced to the former sum. During her reign there was one instance of an application to parliament to relieve the excess of the civil list. In the reign of George 1st, the average expenses of the civil list were about 800,000*l.* Application was made to parliament in his reign for relief. At the accession of George 2nd, the various branches of revenue which had been voted to Anne and George 1st were also voted to the king on the throne; but it was stipulated that parliament was to make good any deficiency below 800,000*l.* When his present majesty came to the throne, many erroneous opinions had been entertained that the revenue enjoyed by his late majesty, and which would have been readily granted by parliament to his present majesty, was his hereditary revenue, which he was entitled to in right of his crown. The error was this—that the hereditary revenue consisted in nothing more than what was given to Charles 2nd in lieu of the court of wards, pre-emption, tonnage, and other royal prerogatives. There was, however, no doubt in the mind of parliament with regard to giving his majesty the same as had been enjoyed by his predecessors. It is well known his majesty was fully persuaded there was such an intention on the part of his parliament; had the fact been otherwise, the House would have been less just towards his majesty than former parliaments had been with regard to his predecessors. In consequence, no doubt, of his majesty being aware of the sentiments of parliament, a message was brought down soon after his accession, by the then chancellor of the exchequer, stating, that his majesty, ever desirous of giving a proof of sincere regard for the welfare of his people, left it to his faithful Commons in making provision for the support of the dignity of his crown, to arrange such dispositions and settle such a sum for the expenses of his household and civil list as would best suit the interest of the public. The conduct of his majesty in giving up his hereditary rights, and leaving it to parliament to provide the whole of his revenue, has been called by sir William Blackstone a proof of the most disinterested bounty; and in consequence of it parliament assigned a revenue of 900,000*l.* a year, subject to life annuities to the princess dowager of Wales, the princess Amelia, and the duke of Cumberland, amounting to 70,000*l.* It could not (and indeed it was foretold) happen otherwise than that, in the course of a long period, growing incumbrances would arise, which would render it necessary for his majesty to resort to the liberality of parliament. Accordingly, in 1769, an application was made to this House; in consequence of which a grant of 513,511*l.* was made to his majesty to make good the arrears of his civil list. In 1775, 100,000*l.* was granted for the same purpose. In 1776, the incumbrances arising from an increase of expenses, which were hourly growing upon him, were such that his majesty was reduced to the necessity of making another application to parliament, and a sum of 618,340*l.* was granted to relieve him from his difficulties. In 1784 there was a further grant of 60,000*l.* and in 1786 of 210,000*l.* The whole sum, therefore, that has been granted at different periods to pay off the excess of the civil list expenses has been 1,523,511*l.* I would ask, whether the sums which have been granted to his majesty on account of the arrears of the civil list up to the present time, when the situation and circumstances of his family are taken into consideration, and when we advert to the fact, that the country, during the whole of the period, has been advancing in wealth and prosperity, is a sum which, added to the amount of the civil list of each year, was capable of producing a revenue equal to what was enjoyed by Anne, or George 1st or 2nd,

Digitized by Google

We have arrived then at a period when his majesty is again under the necessity of requiring the assistance of the House. The course that has been taken will, I am persuaded, be considered by the House with satisfaction, if not with gratitude, as meaning to put the House in possession of the most complete information, and leave no room for cavil or doubt by the concealment of any thing that could in the least tend to elucidate the subject. His majesty having expressed himself most graciously in his message to the House and requested that the object of it might be taken into consideration, it was thought necessary that a committee should be appointed. A committee has been appointed, and the subject has been investigated in a manner adapted to the wish of his majesty. They have unravelled the whole of the accounts; they have stated whatever was calculated to render them clear and capable of being fully understood. They had no authority to offer any opinion of their own; they have not offered any; they have made no observations whatever, except such as were necessary to enable the House to comprehend the accounts submitted to them. This leads me to the consideration of the accounts themselves; and whatever may be the feelings of regret by which I am actuated, and painful as it may be to me to reflect that, if the committee shall adopt the resolutions I shall have the honour to propose, it will produce a considerable addition to the burthen of the people, I am persuaded the committee will neither discover in the report nor the accounts, the slightest imputation of mismanagement with respect to his majesty's household, of corruption in any quarter, or of profusion in the disposition in any part of the sum allotted to the expenses of the civil list. Under those heads of charge of which the House is justly most jealous, namely, pensions and salaries, there has been a very considerable reduction. It appears, that in comparing the increase and decrease with regard to the pensions and allowances to the royal family, the first class of the civil list accounts, the total increase above the estimate is 45,183*l.* In the second class, which refers to the salaries of the chancellor, speaker, and judges, there is a decrease of 2,987*l.* below the estimate. In the third class, comprehending the salaries to ministers resident at foreign courts, there is an increase of 129,643*l.* In the fourth class, containing the charge for tradesmen's bills, the excess on the whole amounts to 74,090*l.* In the fifth class, the charge for the menial servants of his majesty's household, there is a decrease of 1,605*l.* In the sixth class, or pension list, there is, on the whole account, a decrease to the amount of 114,402*l.* In the seventh class, comprising the salaries payable out of the civil list revenues, there has been a gradual diminution, by which there has been a saving of 129,750*l.* The eighth class, containing the salaries of the commissioners of the Treasury, and chancellor of the exchequer, admits of neither excess or diminution. Under the head Occasional Payments, there is an increase of 1,047,587*l.*; the particulars of which are stated in the report of your committee. I wish the committee, in adverting to the civil list expenditure, to divide it into two branches—the household and civil list establishment; and I am persuaded it will experience some degree of surprise that the increased expenses of the former are so small as they appear to be. No individual, who is obliged to preserve an appearance of rank, has of late years been able to do so, out of so little as at the period when the present civil list was granted to his majesty. When gentlemen refer to their experience of the increased value of every article in the course of the last two or three years, and when they reflect on all the circumstances of the times, I am sure the excess will be readily accounted for. I desire to have it understood, that I do not mean to attribute the excess so much to the war as many other persons may be inclined to do. It will be recollected, that during the war there have been three years of scarcity. Many of the articles to which the expenditure of his majesty's civil list refers have certainly been increased by the war, but not in the way gentlemen have stated. However satisfactory the accounts are in one point of view, they must be a subject of regret and shame on the other; because it is impossible for the committee not to be sensible what difficulty his majesty must have experienced with regard to his household. I am fully aware that there are many parts of the accounts which ought to receive explanation—it is not, however my intention at present to enter into the various articles which compose the accounts, unless I am called upon so to do by the committee:

Digitized by Google

there are, however, several articles which I feel it incumbent on me to advert to. In page 52 it will appear, that part of the debt is the debt under the first class, including the debts incurred by the queen, on account of the younger branches of her family. When it is considered what is the number and time of life of the younger branches of the royal family, and that the expense on their account falls exclusively on the queen, it will be no small matter of astonishment that the debt should have amounted to no more than a sum of 28,634*l*. A very large portion of this arose upon the marriage of the prince of Wales. In the same page will be found a charge for the princess Charlotte. It is made to commence in 1797, though it was not advanced till a later period. I am sure it will be felt by the committee, that it is quite impossible the expense of supporting the princess Charlotte should be borne by the prince of Wales, considering the restrictions to which he is subject by the act of parliament for arranging the liquidation of his debts. It will, perhaps, be for the committee to say, whether it is not a charge that ought to be taken from the civil list altogether, and thrown on the consolidated fund? It is a charge that cannot be borne by the prince of Wales, and ought not to be imposed upon his majesty. I beg the attention of the committee to pages 39 and 40, referring to the pensions to the late ministers at foreign courts. I am well aware that some farther information is necessary. Ample information will be given; and, whatever deficiency there may be in mine, will be supplied by my noble friend near me. I will observe that, with regard to foreign ministers resident, it has been universally admitted, that the estimate made in 1786 was insufficient. The pensions of the late ministers at foreign courts have increased considerably within the last two years; yet notwithstanding the increase which has taken place within the last two years is so considerable, the actual increase in the last sixteen years amounts to no more than 129,643*l*. There is another branch which falls under the head of Occasional Payments. The committee perceiving there was an error of 20,000*l*. thought it right to avail themselves of the information contained in the book required to be kept by Mr. Burke's bill. In page 46 of the Report will be found the amount of royal bounties. It is not my intention to observe on the advances to the royal family, though satisfactory reasons can be given for them. I can state with truth to the House, that under the pressure and difficulty which existed with regard to the state of his majesty's household and civil list, I conceive his majesty's ministers would have been little less than criminal if they had not adopted some method of relief. I am unwilling to enter into particulars, unless called upon; but I am prepared. His majesty's ministers had no alternative between the one they have adopted, and the criminality of exposing his majesty to inconvenience and difficulty.—The chancellor of the exchequer then went over all the items of which the arrears now standing are composed, the amount of which was 990,053*l*., a sum which, he said, it was impossible to contemplate without regret; but he had stated how a large portion of it had been created; no part of it was owing to profusion, none of it had been corruptly employed, and it appeared from the report what a vast portion of the whole of this went to the necessary purposes of the civil government, and was not at all appropriated, as some had most erroneously supposed, for his majesty's personal use, or for his own household establishment. Now, he would ask any gentleman in the committee, if any there were, who were disposed to advert to the amount of the present deficiency, to compare it with those former aids of the civil list, to which he had adverted in the early part of his observations to the committee, to compare the advance made in the expenditure under the various heads of the report, on the subject of the civil list, and then to see whether there was to be found in any part of the expenditure the character of profusion? Had we seen any thing but what was to be esteemed a necessary splendor on the part of the royal family?—Certainly none. We had seen one sort of abundance on the part of the chief magistrate of the community in which we had the happiness to live. Every virtue that belonged to that character abounded in him; but with respect to outward splendor, the loyal feelings of the people would have gone much further, if desired, than they had hitherto been called upon to do; and he would venture to say, that the people had rather been disappointed for want of more, than satiated with too much of that splendor. The sum advanced for the discharge of

Digitized by Google

the arrears of the civil list for the same period, in another reign, was more than was now required. And he wished to know, whether there was any reason for supposing that, although 1,400,000*l.* were justly granted at a former period, there ought not to be 900,000*l.* granted now? For his part, comparing the present with the former time, and that when the last aid was granted, and the unavoidable expenses in the interim, of which every individual of condition in this country felt the force, in his own and his family expenses, he thought the present arrears extremely moderate, that it gave full proof of remarkable frugality; that the economy was very great; for which reason he trusted there would be no opposition to the resolution, with which he should have the honour of concluding. He had no hesitation in saying, that, according to his opinion, the augmentation for the younger branches of the royal family, or advances made to them, should not in future be chargeable on the civil list, but on the consolidated fund, of which however parliament were to judge. If the House adopted the resolution which he should have the honour of moving, the expense in the first instance would fall on the people; there was, however, a circumstance to be attended to in that particular. The committee would recollect that he expressed a hope, on a former occasion, that there would be some means of a diminution of the burthens of the people by the sale of the crown lands in the West Indies, St. Vincent, &c. that was not, however, to be provided for at this moment, but might become matter for future discussion; but he begged to be understood, as being most clearly of opinion, that without any reference to such resources as that to which he had now hinted, and if there had been no hope of any such resource, the payment of the present arrears of the civil list would be matter of unquestionable propriety, and such as would become the wisdom of parliament to provide for. The subject therefore of these resources from the West Indies, was fit matter for a separate and distinct discussion. The civil list arrears ought, in his opinion, to be paid off without taking that matter into consideration at all. He was well convinced that if there were no resources, but such as he had hinted at, parliament would find them abundant, in the good sense, the justice, and the loyalty of the people of England. Now, although it was not his intention to propose any permanent addition now to the civil list, yet he had no difficulty in saying it would, in the present condition of things, be impossible to maintain, without further aid, the necessary splendor of the Crown, and to support the necessary expenditure of the royal family; and therefore, he hoped, that some relief would be afforded to the civil list hereafter, by taking away from it some charges which at present bore, and which, in his opinion, did not belong to it, and laying them on the consolidated fund. Several heads of charges now upon the civil list, and which had been so during the war, might with propriety be charged on the consolidated fund, and which charges were very heavy and enormous on his majesty's civil list revenue during the war. The account of all which should be laid before them: and after such accounts were laid before the House, he hoped the subject would be brought forward again for discussion, for which he should be perfectly ready. He thought it was unnecessary for him to trouble the committee any further, for the present; he was thankful for the indulgence he had met in the course of what he had delivered before the committee, some parts of which were naturally dry and unengaging, and, he was afraid rendered more so from the manner in which it had been treated by him. He should now conclude with moving, "That it is the opinion of this committee, that a sum not exceeding 990,053*l.* be granted to his majesty, to discharge arrears and debts due and owing on the civil list, on the 5th of January, 1802."

Mr. *Fox* rose and said:—Sir, there is no man in this House less disposed than I feel myself, at any time, to find fault with such measures as may be conducive to the comfort, the splendor, and the dignity of every branch of the royal family; and particularly what may tend to the ease and happiness of the chief magistrate of the state, as far as I can reconcile such proceedings to the duty I owe to my own constituents in particular, and the general interests of the country. If it could be supposed that humour or temper were to govern any part of this discussion, the present is a moment in which I could have little disposition to indulge them. I have not been more than about four hours in town; and, since leaving my carriage, have heard of two articles of news than which I know of

Digitized by Google

nothing of a public nature that could be more grateful to my feelings. The first is that in which every man, wishing well to his country, must rejoice, I mean the conclusion of the definitive treaty of peace with France; and the second, that it is the intention of the minister to move for the repeal of the income-tax,—a tax the most oppressive, pernicious, and vexatious, that ever was imposed in any country; and tending more than any other to subvert that respect in which a good government ought always to be held by the people, and without which there can be very little security for its subsisting for any length of time. This, however, is a subject which is by no means connected with good or ill humour, and is solely dependent on what is consistent with our attachment to the throne, a proper view to the laws of the land, and the sacred principles of the British constitution. However I may have been instructed or entertained by the right hon. gentleman, in the history he has given us of the civil list during the last century, I do not conceive it to have been precisely in point, or to bear strongly on the present question. My ideas upon that subject differ vastly from those which have been brought forward in this committee; nor can I conceive how any thing respecting the revenues of the crown previously to the Revolution, has more analogy to the present civil list than what may be drawn from the remotest antiquity. The revenues of the crown before the event alluded to, compared with the present civil list, was as gold to silver. The king certainly possessed immense revenues in former times, totally independent of parliament: but for this revenue, what had he to do? He was to raise and maintain fleets and armies in times of war, as well as in peace. It was no private income of his own, as an individual, but a trust from the public. It is very true, that such revenue was not adequate to meet extraordinary occasions; and though the monarch was bound, at his own expence, to defend the country, and maintain the expenses of wars, as well as civil government, in cases of necessity he applied to parliament for assistance. Whether that mode was preferable to that which has been since adopted, is a question not worth discussing at this moment; but I am free to confess, that I am a strong advocate in favour of the modern system. Now, however, that the House and the country provide for all the expences (and God knows they have been severe enough lately!) of our fleets and armies, the revenues allotted to the crown must necessarily be at the disposition, and subject to the control of parliament. It would be a strange and absurd doctrine indeed, to maintain that the public should take upon itself all the expense, and leave the revenue precisely as it was before: such a doctrine is too monstrous to have met with any support even in the worst of times. Fortunately for us, some of our kings have been too improvident, by which they outran their incomes.

In treating of this question I do not wish to be severe; but I understand, that so much stress has lately been made on the claims which some persons suppose the crown ought still to have upon a part at least, if not the whole of the old hereditary revenue, that I cannot withhold expressing briefly my opinion on that subject. Were we now to allow the hereditary revenue to be the same as it was in former times, surely no gentleman could possibly say that it should be applied to the purposes of the civil list only. I admit that the revenue of James 2nd was two millions annually; but I believe no one will venture to assert that it was granted only for civil-list purposes. From the time, however, that parliament exonerated the crown (for that is the fact) from the expense of levying and supporting fleets and armies, from that moment the hereditary revenues became the property of the public. It was so understood, and so expressed on the election of William 3rd. He could hold no hereditary revenue *jure coronæ*, for he was not the heir to the crown when he succeeded James 2nd. I am aware that a great misunderstanding prevailed upon this subject, and perhaps continues to prevail; but we are not now infected with the superstitious notions imbibed by some persons of that day. We know that William 3rd ascended the throne, not by right, but by the choice and election of the people, and therefore had no rights *jure coronæ*, nor any other rights but such as had been covenanted. So of George 3rd. He is not the heir of James 2nd, but of William 3rd; nor has he any right to this hereditary revenue, unless we go back to the ancient and absolute rights of prescription. What did the parliament of William 3rd do? Instead of the hereditary revenue, they appropriated others for

Digitized by Google

the civil list, to the amount of 700,000*l.* a year; and should they exceed that sum, the surplus was to be at the disposal of parliament. From the sum of 700,000*l.* they deducted 370,000*l.* for public services; decreed that the crown revenues should be under their own control; and came to what I consider to have been a wise and salutary resolution, of granting it to him for life. The same practice has since been uniformly adopted at the commencement of every reign. I know perfectly well that there has been much difference of opinion on the question, whether it would not be better to make these grants of annual revenue from time to time. This doubt so far operated in the parliament of king William, that the provision was at first made temporary, but it was afterwards thought expedient that the provision should be for life. The same line of conduct was pursued on the accession of queen Anne, and has been followed up in all the succeeding reigns. The right hon. gentleman has anticipated the answer which might be given to some parts of his statement. I know that it has been a mistake made, not by lawyers or other well-informed persons, but by courtiers, that the hereditary revenue formed only a part of the revenue of the crown. From general recollection also (for I have not lately had much access to the Journals) I think that in the reign of queen Anne an application was made to parliament in aid of the civil list, at a time when 800,000*l.* had been expended, though the grant was no more than 700,000*l.* Great stress has been laid on the expenses his majesty has been put to in consequence of his family; but let it be remembered, that there were equal incumbrances in the reign of George 1st; that in the reign of George 2nd annuities to the duke of Cumberland, the princess Amelia, and the dowager princess of Wales, were charged upon the civil list to the amount of 100,000*l.* which, out of the grant of 700,000*l.*, left only 600,000*l.* of actual revenue. It is true, that in that reign there were three applications to parliament for relieving the civil list; but I believe, and think I may say with some confidence, that the relief was effected by a two-penny tax on all pensions and salaries, which was, in fact, a mode of making the civil list supply and make good its own defalcations, without any additional burthens on the public. In the same reign there was a successful application to parliament at one particular period; but, if I mistake not, it was merely to make up the deficiency between the actual receipts of the revenue, and 800,000*l.*, which was about that time settled as the limit of the civil list. The right hon. gentleman has urged, that the civil list of his present majesty had been loaded with annuities to the princess Amelia, the duke of Cumberland, &c.; but if these were liens on the civil list in the present, they were equally so in the reign of George 2nd, who had also to pay 100,000*l.* a year to the then prince of Wales. These annuities continued from 1745 to 1760; the remainder of the civil list of his present majesty only for five; but George 2nd had paid them for the space of fifteen years. I mention this principally, because I do not esteem it altogether becoming in gentlemen to appear in this House, in the shape and manner of counsel, to depreciate the amount of the present revenues of the crown.

It is to be observed, that all those annuities which hung as incumbrances on the civil list of his present majesty, ceased in the year 1786; that to the duke of Cumberland expired in 1765; that to the dowager princess of Wales in 1768; and that to the princess Amelia in 1786; so that, in fact, the whole of them ceased before the debt now brought forward began to accumulate. The proposition, so much boasted of, which was made in the beginning of the present reign, would have been a good one, if properly followed up. By that proposal the king relinquished nothing, because, constitutionally, he had nothing to give up in point of right, there being no right in existence. All that was done may more properly be considered in the way of an exchange. His majesty, indeed, had a right to expect that parliament would make the same allowance to him that they did to his ancestors; but when a civil list of 800,000*l.* a-year was granted to his grandfather, it was implied that the excess, which was never very considerable, should be subject to the controul of parliament, and that he should possess no more income from the revenues of this country than what the parliament thought proper to allow him. The right hon. gentleman, in tracing the history of the civil list through the course of the present reign, might have called to mind, that it was settled under an administration composed

Digitized by Google

of persons who were considered as his majesty's peculiar favourites. The duke of Newcastle was then prime minister, and lord Bute and the late lord Chatham, secretaries of state. The right hon. gentleman seems to think the provision was less than it ought to be; but let me ask, is it to be believed that such an administration would ever have thought of proposing an inadequate revenue? But supposing they had done so, yet we must recollect, that the several annuities already mentioned were then so many incumbrances on the civil list; and yet we find that the debts it incurred in the first nine years amounted to no more than 500,000*l.* Though I was at that time a member of this House, I remember little of the discussion, and do not recollect that I was even present at the debate; but I recollect reading some pamphlets at that time published on the subject; one of these was written by a gentleman whose pursuits have since taken a more serious and holy turn—I mean Dr. Tucker, dean of Gloucester, who treated the matter in a very facetious and good-humoured manner. In offering an apology for the proceedings, he said, that it was no extraordinary thing if a very young man, just come to his estate, and consequently not so prudent and economical as experience might in time teach him to be, and who had lately incurred the expenses of matrimony, enhanced by fêtes, a coronation, installation, &c.—It was no very extraordinary thing if such a man, possesed of 800,000*l.* annually should in nine years contract a debt of 500,000*l.* The debt first incurred was at the rate of 50,000*l.* a-year beyond the income allotted. Parliament, it is true, consented to pay it; but, by doing so, acted, in the opinion of many persons, rather rashly. In the year 1777 the ministers came again with another demand; and it appeared that the debt had increased more within the eight years between 1769 and 1777, than it had done in the former nine years. The demand I now refer to was for the sum of 600,000*l.*; and though ministers were successful, yet the minority, which condemned the payment of the sum, was by no means insignificant in point of numbers, but still less so in respect to character and talents, as the committee will acknowledge when I enumerate among them sir George Saville, Mr. Burke, Lord Sydney, &c. I have frequently had occasion to be convinced, that the more parliament agrees to act (what, in the vulgar phrase, is called) handsomely by the monarch on the throne in pecuniary affairs, the worse effect is sure to flow from it; and I always feel great pleasure in recollecting the speech which the then Speaker of the House of Commons, sir Fletcher Norton, made upon that occasion to his majesty at the bar of the House of Lords, May 7, 1777. That intrepid and public-spirited man told the king, that "in a time of public distress, full of difficulty and danger, their constituents labouring under burthens almost too heavy to be borne; your faithful Commons have not only granted to your majesty a large present supply, but also a very great additional revenue; great beyond example; great beyond your majesty's highest expense; all this they have done in the well-grounded confidence that you will apply wisely what they have granted liberally."* But if sir Fletcher Norton spoke thus of the distress and burthens of the country in 1777, what character can be given to those of the present day?

It reminds me, Sir, of the observation of Florus, who, living at a period when the Roman empire was so infinitely extended, reflects with surprise, that his ancestors allowed a triumph for victories over the Volsci; and, in the same manner, when we look back to the year 1777, when the public burthens were then spoken of as so grievous, and when we view the infinite accumulation of taxes since that period, we are tempted to compare it to the observation of Florus on the triumphs of the Romans over the Volsci, or some other petty tribes. The speech of sir Fletcher Norton, notwithstanding the clamours of courtiers, was approved. Although court sycophancy has of late increased to a degree that must disgust every generous mind, although servility has made such rapid strides as, to every philosophic observer, evidently tends to the utter destruction of the constitution, yet we cannot forget the subserviency and sycophancy of former periods. Notwithstanding the resentment of the courtiers at the manly and spirited language of the Speaker, it was finally carried, on a motion brought forward by myself, to thank sir Fletcher for his general conduct in the chair, and particularly for the speech in question. This speech was made by a man of eminent qualities,

* See vol. 19, p. 213.

Digitized by Google

eminent too in having filled the chair, a situation which of itself makes a man respectable; and within five years, during the administration of the marquis of Rockingham (a period when peerages were more sparingly granted than in the times that have succeeded), sir Fletcher Norton was one of four persons who were honoured with that dignity. About this period, Mr. Burke, a man of the greatest abilities, of the most eminent services, a man for whom, notwithstanding latter differences, I have always retained the greatest veneration, brought forward a bill, the principle of which was, that the debts of the civil list were criminal; that when parliament had settled what the expenditure should be, any excess was disobedience; that it was the duty of the king's ministers to square the expense of the civil list by what parliament had fixed, not the business of parliament to keep pace with the extravagance of the king's ministers. Such, unquestionably, was the spirit of Mr. Burke's bill, and that bill clearly lays down that such a mode of payment shall be adopted that the salary of the highest class shall not be paid till that of the class immediately below is paid. I know that in the courts below an act must explain itself; but here we may reason upon the spirit and intent of the legislature; and indeed I cannot perceive that the act is so loosely worded as the right hon. gentleman argues; far less can I admit the position, that the violation of it being never complained of in this House constitutes an argument that none has ever taken place. If omission or silence were to be construed into acquiescence and approbation, not a principle of the constitution would remain entire, nor an abuse at one time or other without justification. So much was Mr. Burke convinced that his bill would produce the effect I have mentioned, that he boasted, as one of the advantages of it, that henceforth no arrear in the civil list could ever take place.

But, if Mr. Burke's bill has not produced all the good he intended, what are we to do in regard to the arrear that has accumulated? I adhere to the practice of our ancestors, and to the principles on which they fixed the civil list, as a measure essential to the existence of the monarchy. But why, as a friend to the monarchy, do I conceive that we ought not to acquiesce in the payment of this arrear? It is because it is essential to the monarchy that the king should, by a fixed revenue, be enabled to pay his civil-list expenses, independent of parliament. If, however, we find that four times in this reign the debts of the civil list have been brought to parliament, the king actually becomes dependent on parliament to that extent. What is the nature of the civil list? Nobody imagines that every year the expenses will be exactly the same. It is sufficient that, on the whole, the funds shall be sufficient to meet what is allowed to be an ample establishment. Till 1793 there was no excess; since that period the arrear has accrued. What are we to infer from this? Is it that a peace civil list will not do for a state of war? When the civil list of king William was fixed, was there not the prospect of wars? In three cases out of five the civil list since that period has been voted in time of actual war.

It is said, that it is necessary to maintain the splendor of the monarchy; and certainly I approve of that splendor, nor do I think his majesty has ever carried it to excess; but, surely, if it were for urgent reasons at any time to be abridged, it would be reduced with most grace when war calls upon the public in general to submit to such galling sacrifices. I contend, therefore, that the civil list should be voted for life, and the quantum fixed by parliament ought not to be exceeded. Variations in the expenses from year to year must have been foreseen, but an exceeding ought to be compensated by a future saving. If an arrear is incurred, ministers should restrict the expenditure till it is paid off. Nay, reformations and reductions, if necessary, should be adopted, to prevent an accumulation of debt, and to create a sort of sinking fund for its extinction. Parliament having settled what the civil list should be, ministers are guilty of usurping the legislative authority in extending the actual amount beyond the sum fixed. If it is thought improper to adopt reforms, or suspend or abolish places, to prevent the increase of debt, parliament ought to be consulted on the emergency. There is no excuse for accumulations. Experience shows that they ultimately must come before parliament. Why, therefore, is the certain accumulation permitted? With what face can ministers come down to parliament and say, "You fixed the annual expense of the civil list at 900,000*l.*, but we have actually spent 950,000*l.*: you made one law, we have acted on another: you

Digitized by Google

must obey us; it is not for us to obey you?" Observe, too, the time when ministers discover that the war adds so much to the expense of the civil list. They announce the effect when the cause has ceased. They were afraid to tell us formerly that the war added so much to every expense of life, because the confession might have rendered the war unpopular, and have interfered with their plans.

Besides, ministers do not consider the aids the civil list has received. Mr. Burke's bill, by abolishing places to the extent of 30,000*l.* a-year, actually increased it to that amount. It is to be considered, too, that no small part of the civil list consists of fixed salaries, such as the great officers of state, which have not been increased since the days of Charles 2nd. The source of increase, owing to temporary causes, must apply only to the tradesmen's bills; and if any part were at all to be paid off, this would be the branch of arrear I could be induced to give my consent that parliament should discharge. We have seen the repeated interference of parliament only produce new demands upon it. We are told, however, that there has been no prodigality, no corruption. But, have we all the items before us? Do we know the expense of the office of third secretary of state?—a measure which, pernicious in a financial view, is still more so as a question of constitution. On the present occasion, the length of the late administration has one advantage (an advantage, however, which, in my opinion, is far from counter-balancing other evils), that we know exactly to whom the arrear is imputable. When these ministers saw the growing arrears of the civil list, did they make any effort to relieve a fund already overloaded? No, they established a new office of third secretary of state. This is but one item. Many of the occasional expenses seem unjustifiable. At the time of the Russian armament, ministers, finding it necessary to yield to the opposition they experienced in this House, aided by the public voice without, were obliged to drop the ground of quarrel with the empress. At that time, though we had lord Whitworth at Petersburgh, a person fully equal to the station in which he was placed, ministers thought proper to send Mr. Fawkener, of whom from more intimate knowledge I can speak more confidently. Mr. Fawkener, a man of the greatest abilities, and fit to be employed in any business, however delicate and important, was sent to Petersburgh to do that which our minister there could surely have done; that is, intimate that we gave up to the empress every thing she wished respecting Oczacow. Lately too, Mr. G. Grenville, a gentleman for whom I entertain the greatest personal respect, was sent to Berlin, though we had at that court a minister, who, it is to be presumed, was adequate to the duty of the office in which he was employed. Last year, though we had a minister at Copenhagen, lord Whitworth was sent to Copenhagen to do for another what Mr. Fawkener had done for him at Petersburgh; and his being sent on that occasion showed that he was thought qualified for more important business, if necessary, than that in which Mr. Fawkener superseded him, and which was merely to make a civil bow to the empress, and announce that we had dropt all opposition to her views. All these occasional expenses, therefore, seem to have been incurred without any sufficient reason.

Neither can I see that any addition to the establishment of secretaries of state was necessary. Formerly all the business of America and the West Indies belonged to the office of the secretary for the southern department; and lord Chatham, a personage undoubtedly of the greatest talents, but labouring under the interruptions of bad health, not only performed all the duty of those offices, but united with them the conduct of a war, which at least vied in glory and success with that conducted by Mr. Dundas. The office of third secretary, which had been established with such fatal effects to the empire, was abolished by Mr. Burke's bill, and it was not till 1794 that it was revived; and though two of the secretaries of state, holding different offices, resolved to accept no salaries but for one of the places, it was so arranged that those personages took their emoluments out of funds immediately affecting the public, and in such a way as to relieve the civil list to the extent of 8,000*l.* a year. Yet all the inferior expenses of the new secretary's office were added to the civil list. This, I dare say, produced since 1794 an expense not under 70,000*l.* I conceive that the establishment of the new office was altogether unnecessary; but, even had it been wanted, ministers should have considered their means of paying the expenses of the old establishment before

Digitized by Google

they increased it with new. The civil list (to personify it) should have reasoned like an individual, "I wish for this or the other thing, but can I pay for it?" Thus the civil list: "'I wish to have a new secretary of state." "But have you the means to pay for him?"—"No; but the House of Commons will pay cheerfully. I have good friends there."—"But ask your friends first."—"Oh, no; it is not necessary; I can use freedom; I know my friends very well; they will be quite delighted with the opportunity. They have brothers and cousins to provide for. Never fear; let the expense be incurred. Say nothing about the matter at present; the House of Commons will pay the money, and ask no questions." Thus, without the least necessity, and amid increasing debts, new modes of expense are employed without decency, and sanctioned without a murmur.

My opinion then is, that we ought to reject the motion, and address his majesty that he would be graciously pleased to confine the expense of the civil list within 900,000*l.*, and establish such savings and reforms as will create a sinking fund to pay off the debt contracted by the misconduct of his ministers. And here let me, in illustration, allude to the case of the Prince of Wales. We have been told, that the expenses of living are increased to such a degree that the funds of the civil list are no longer adequate to their former objects. But surely the expenses of the Prince of Wales must be still more dependent on the increase of prices, and the charges on the mode of living? The Prince of Wales having in the first outset of life exceeded his allowance, has been restricted to 60,000*l.* a year. But did parliament in his case consider the change in the value of money, and in the price of living, by which the Prince of Wales must be so much affected? The Prince of Wales, in 1787, having declared that his allowance, as then fixed, was sufficient, I conceived that he ought to adhere to that declaration, and that a reservation of his new establishment should be made for the payment of his debts. But has not the crown, by conferring marks of honour on sir Fletcher Norton, and more recently by the message in 1786, declared that the sum of 900,000*l.* was sufficient? for the civil list ought to be no less bound to adhere to that engagement, than a young man just entering into life. But, if it is proper to maintain the splendor of the monarchy, the same argument holds good in the case of the heir apparent. Parliament, however, thought it right for a season to abridge the splendor of the Prince of Wales's establishment, in order to supply a fund for the extinction of his debts; and the same principle ought now to be acted upon. If this be not adopted, at any rate only the tradesmen's bills should now be paid; but the occasional payments, and other branches of debt, should be treated agreeably to the spirit of Mr. Burke's act. I hope that peace will put an end to that species of misrepresentation so prevalent of late years, that every man who opposes measures calculated to increase the influence of the crown, and the power of a minister, is an enemy to the monarchy itself. The influence of the crown has increased so much, that a temporary reform in its means of expense could be attended with no abridgment of its authority. Formerly, the crown had more to give with smaller burdens. Its influence now arises from the enormous naval and military establishments, which the wars of Europe and our relations with other powers have produced. In these there is ample compensation for any suspension of inferior offices connected with the civil list. Mr. Justice Blackstone has been quoted. Mr. Justice Blackstone rather leaned to the principles most in fashion anterior to the Revolution; and yet this writer has the good sense and candour to admit, that it may be doubted whether the admirable arrangement in fixing the civil list has not compensated to the crown for many of the prerogatives which it formerly used to exercise. I can truly affirm, that it is my wish to contribute every exertion of mine, by every legitimate means, to promote the happiness and glory of the sovereign; but there is a duty I owe to my constituents and the country, not inferior to the respect I owe to the monarchy. I wish to address the throne in language different from the language of servility. Courtiers may flatter kings, by telling them that parliament will pay whatever they think proper to spend. A different language is more seasonable and more consonant to the principles which placed his majesty on the throne. I would recommend this House to address his majesty with due respect, to suggest to him that he ought to reject the insidious advice of his courtiers; that he should dis-

Digitized by Google

trust the ministers who mislead him into unnecessary expense; that it is his duty in all matters of finance to comply with the restrictions of parliament; and that it will be for the dignity of his crown, and for the prosperity of his people, to quadrate his expenses by the rules which the wisdom of parliament has prescribed.

Mr. *Pitt* observed, that all that the right hon. gentleman had said resolved itself into two points: the first was, that it was inconsistent with the duty of parliament, and contrary to the system upon which the civil list was granted to the crown for life, in any case to pay a debt contracted upon that civil list—the other question was with respect to the meaning of Mr. Burke's bill. In arguing upon this, and indeed upon almost every other subject, the right hon. gentleman had always shown himself fonder of quoting any other times than his own, from any ministers rather than those whom he had opposed, and from any parliament rather than those of which he himself had formed a part; but the right hon. gentleman had been rather unfortunate in his precedents upon this occasion, for there was not one of them that was not an exception to the conclusion which he wished to draw: because the right hon. gentleman had not been able to show a single instance in which, upon a case stated, the debt had not been paid; and he was sure he could not point out any case in which all the circumstances had been so fully explained, and all the facts so clearly laid before the House, as the one then before the committee. He therefore did not feel himself bound to argue at large the question, whether parliament, by granting the civil list for life, had deprived itself of the power of relieving the crown from occasional embarrassments. He would not enter into a discussion of the civil list, nor would he occupy the time of the committee by arguing much upon the construction of Mr. Burke's bill, by which the right hon. gentleman had contended that no debt upon the civil list could legally exist. With regard to this construction of the bill, he could only say, that it was one which he had never acted upon. His right hon. friend had stated, that there were many cases in which, subsequent to the passing of that bill, parliament had been apprized that debts upon the civil list had been incurred, and which had not been considered as violations of that bill. The right hon. gentleman had spoken of an *argumentum ad hominem*, and had objected to any interference being drawn from it; but he contended, that he had a right to press that argument, particularly if it related to a period near to that when the bill passed, and when of course, if the bill had been violated, those by whom it was brought in would not suffer it to be violated without censure. If the right hon. gentleman would turn to the Journals, he would find that the first excess upon the civil list, after Mr. Burke's bill, arose in the year ending the 5th of April 1784; at that time he (Mr. Pitt) had been three months in office, and the other nine months of the year, the right hon. gentleman himself was secretary of state, Mr. Burke paymaster, and lord John Cavendish chancellor of the exchequer. It appeared distinctly upon the Journals, that during the three last quarters of the year 1783, when those gentlemen were in office, there was an exceeding upon the civil list to the same amount as in the first quarter of 1784. This excess was laid before parliament, and was voted without any objection of this kind being urged against it; therefore it was evident, that the construction now contended for was not then considered as the real construction of the bill. He confessed that this question about the construction of the act never came into his mind; and in looking at the words of the act, it certainly was a matter of doubt. Undoubtedly, if Mr. Burke's speech was referred to in order to construe the act, it might have borne the construction the right hon. gentleman put upon it; but it was rather singular that Mr. Burke, who was not only a watchful member of parliament, but a severe and hostile opposer of ministers at that period, should not have said one word about the violation of his own act, or contend for any such construction as that for which the right hon. gentleman had now argued. In 1786, the subject was again brought under the notice of parliament, and certainly Mr. Burke did not upon that occasion make any such objection; the motion having passed without a division, though at that time very few questions passed without long discussions and divisions. Now, if the construction which the right hon. gentleman contended for, had been at that time considered the true construction of the bill, was it likely, in the state of parties at that day, to have been given

Digitized by Google

up without comment and without notice? But the right hon. gentleman had said, that every thing which parliament might not happen to take notice of, was not therefore to be considered as tacitly acknowledged. Certainly not in every instance; but the right hon. gentleman's argument did not apply in this case. This was not a mere paper laid before parliament, and which might have escaped its notice; it related to a very important subject; it occupied the attention of parliament, and was acted upon. But the argument did not stop here, for in 1789 there was another application to parliament, in consequence of one of the royal family coming of age; the subject was again discussed, but no such construction was even hinted at. Before the war, the arrears undoubtedly were inconsiderable, but after the war had commenced, the subject was two or three times before parliament, when the arrears began to be considerable; but during all that period such a construction as that now contended for had never been put upon this bill. It had been confessed, that up to the period of the war, the excess beyond the estimate, did not exceed 25,000*l.* a year. This the right hon. gentleman seemed inclined to overlook, and to consider the excess as not taking place till the war. It certainly was to be wished that it had not been incurred, but when all the circumstances were taken into consideration, and when none of the items were liable to suspicion, he did not think the right hon. gentleman would induce the committee to oppose the motion. One of the objections of the right hon. gentleman was founded upon the charge for foreign ministers; this was an article of expense which the right hon. gentleman used always to approve of, but he had stated that his objection was not to the continuing the former expenses, but to incurring new ones. The right hon. gentleman had objected, that different persons had been sent upon different missions, and had been witty upon the subject of lord Whitworth being sent to Copenhagen, and another gentleman having been sent on a former occasion to Petersburgh, and had contended that the whole of this charge ought to be struck off. It would indeed be most extraordinary economy, to say, the civil list is in a state of difficulty, and therefore we must not send extraordinary missions to foreign courts, although perhaps it might be the means of saving the country from a war, or of leading to the conclusion of a peace. He would not now enter into any argument about the object of these missions, he would only ask, whether a difference of 2 or 3,000*l.* arising from such a cause, and under all the circumstances of the times, ought to decide the conduct of government, or whether it ought to be introduced into a grave assembly by a grave man? With regard to what the right hon. gentleman had said about the office of secretary of state, it was a subject which had often been mentioned in the House, and might be discussed again; but it would not be easy to state any period in which there was occasion for greater exertion and vigilance than during the war, and which must in a considerable degree, be kept up during the peace. The right hon. gentleman had spoken of the effect of peace and war upon the civil list; but his right hon. friend had proved that this increase did not arise from the war, as such, but had merely increased during a period of war. No such idea had ever been advanced by his right hon. friend as that, because the general expenses of the country were great, the civil list must therefore be increased in proportion. It had been admitted, that some of the expenses of the civil list must have been increased by the great increase in the price of provisions; but there were some expenses which absolutely arose out of the war; he would take for instance one charge, that was foreign messengers, an expense arising almost entirely out of the war. He found that this was charged under the head of occasional payments, under which head the greatest increase had taken place. Many of these expenses could not have been foreseen when the estimate was made. When, however, he saw that the pension list had been kept within its bounds, when he saw that the salaries had been diminished in general, and when he saw that the increase which had taken place was in articles the least liable to suspicion; he thought that no application had ever been made to parliament, the explanation of which was more simple, or one that came with a better grace than that now under consideration. There remained but one point more, upon which he would say a very few words, and that was, respecting the nature of the civil list. Upon this part of the subject he would not enter into any discussion of the different changes which had taken

Digitized by Google

place in the nature of our revenues. He would contend that, when the civil list was once granted to the crown to be disposed of, generally speaking without the interference of parliament, it was at the same time not only the right but the duty of parliament to inquire, whenever they saw any grounds for suspicion of prodigality or corruption, and especially whenever there was any application made to them for relief. The right hon. gentleman had spoken of the expenses in former reigns, but if he took into consideration the grants to the crown and the debt in the three reigns preceding that of his present majesty, he would find that in the first sixty years of the last century, the average expenditure was 794,000*l.* per annum. Now, allowing for all the sums which had been granted in aid of the civil list, and which was now proposed to be granted in aid of the civil list, for the last forty years, the expenditure, upon an average, was not above 918,000*l.* a year. He appealed to the committee, whether this increase in the proportion of from 8 to 9, taking all the circumstances of the times into consideration, deserved the language which had been applied to it by the right hon. gentleman? Let us look at the value of money during the period of which he had been speaking. It had increased in the proportion of from 2 to 3, and the increase in the expenditure of the civil list was only as 8 to 9. It would also be fair to look at the state of the hereditary revenue: the average amount of that revenue during his majesty's reign was 1,200,000*l.* a year, in 1800 it amounted to 1,800,000*l.*; and this great increase of these revenues was an additional proof of the increased prosperity and wealth which the people had acquired during his majesty's reign. He had no doubt but that the committee would concur in the motion of his right hon. friend.

Mr. *Tierney*, though he highly approved of Mr. Fox's general reasoning, could not agree with him that no instance could occur in which a motion for the payment of arrears on the civil list could be constitutionally entertained by the House. Very many instances might exist in which such a motion would be highly fit to be entertained, and when such arrears might be of such a nature as would fully justify their being discharged. Still less, however, could he agree with the right hon. gentleman opposite, that the mere circumstance of the debt having accrued was any ground for the House agreeing to its liquidation, without a previous inquiry into its nature, and a satisfactory statement that it was the result of unavoidable causes. He was not prepared at once to give his direct negative to the payment of the present arrears, and therefore the mode of proceeding which he would recommend would be for the chairman to leave the chair, to report progress, and ask leave to sit again. It would then be in his power to move, that the subject be referred again to a committee, with instructions to them to investigate carefully the character of the several accounts, and to report their opinion to the House as to those parts out of the whole charge which they conceived ought in justice to be paid. He begged the committee to consider, whether all the payments made from the civil list in former reigns, and even since the accession of his present majesty, were now chargeable on its revenue. He believed that, in the early years of his majesty's reign there were many charges on the civil list, which were now satisfied out of other funds specially appropriated for that purpose. But, were the committee fully aware of the actual amount of the civil list revenue at the present moment. He had made some statements, the result of which was, that the amount of the civil list revenue was not less than 1,083,000*l.* It had been confidently affirmed, that the accounts now presented to the House were not liable to animadversion, but he was of a very opposite opinion. At the end of a war unparalleled in the burthens it had brought upon the public, the House were called upon to vote the sum of one million to cover the arrears of the civil list. The discussion of the propriety of voting so large a sum was a matter of the gravest importance.

Dr. *Laurence* said, that nothing was more erroneous than the supposition that Mr. Burke had changed his opinion of the expediency and propriety of his bill. In this opinion, he had continued unshaken in his retirement; if before he quitted public life, he had entertained any doubts on the subject, he would have fairly and openly have made them known to the House and the public. The learned gentleman recommended an adherence to its provisions, and suggested the propriety of revising its most striking clauses.

The Committee divided on Mr. Tierney's amendment. For leaving the chair;

Digitized by Google

46; Against it, 228. The original question was then put, when there appeared, Ayes, 226; Noes, 51: Majority, 175.

Debate in the Lords on the King's Message respecting the Civil List.] March 29. The order of the day being read, and also his Majesty's Message,

Lord *Pelham* said, he conceived it was not necessary for him to go into the subject much at large, because the papers laid upon the table by him some time since, had no doubt been read and considered by every noble lord as well as himself. For this reason, he would briefly recapitulate the statement of the expenditure, divided into distinct classes; 1. The Pensions and Allowances to the Royal Family; 2. The Salaries of the Chancellor, the Speaker, and the Judges; 3. Salaries to Ministers to foreign Courts; 4. The Bills of all Tradesmen; 5. The Menial Servants of his Majesty's Household; 6. The Pension List; 7. The Salaries of all other Places payable out of the Civil List Revenues; 8. The Salaries and Pensions of the High Treasurer, or Commissioners of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer; and, 9thly, Occasional Payments. His lordship explained upon each of these several classes, in what manner the decrease or increase had arisen. In those parts which related immediately to the expenses of his majesty's family, a degree of economy had been practised, which would not fail to excite a just sense of his majesty's earnestness to prevent any additional burthens on his people. For the most part, that branch of the expenditure exceeded the estimate only where the excessive advance on the prices of every article of consumption rendered such exceeding unavoidable. The head under which the greatest exceeding occurred, was that of Occasional Payments; a head, the objects under which were so various, that it was impossible to form any thing like regular estimates to meet them. His lordship then moved, "That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, to return his Majesty the Thanks of this House, for his most gracious Message, and to assure his Majesty of the grateful Sense this House entertains of his Majesty's well-founded Reliance on the loyal and affectionate Attachment of this House to his Majesty's Person and Government; and that this House, fully convinced of his Majesty's constant attention to the ease and welfare of his faithful people, will readily concur in enabling his Majesty to provide such means as shall be thought proper for removing the difficulties that have arisen from the debt which has been incurred in his Majesty's civil government."

Earl *Fitzwilliam* heartily agreed in the early part of the Address; but with regard to expressing their readiness to concur in any mode of relief that might be submitted to them, he conceived they were not ripe for any such declaration. It became the House to make an ample inquiry into the causes to which the debt was attributable. It was the more extraordinary that any new excess should have arisen, because by Mr. Burke's bill, restraints were provided to prevent the possibility of ministers again running the Civil List in debt. It must, therefore, without farther explanation, appear, that ministers had disobeyed a positive act of the legislature. His lordship concluded with moving to leave out, after the words "people will," the rest of the motion, and insert instead thereof, the following words: "immediately proceed to the examination of the circumstances which have led to an accumulation of debt on his majesty's Civil List."

Lord *Hobart* said, that when it was considered that so small a debt had accumulated upon the Civil List expenditure in sixteen years, he thought the best way to manifest their respect to his majesty, would be to vote the Address; and therefore he must oppose the Amendment.

Lord *Holland* said, that no man had a deeper sense than himself of the many advantages the country had enjoyed under the auspices of the illustrious family which now occupied the throne; but recollecting how frequent applications like the present had been made during the present reign, he certainly conceived that so large a sum should not be granted as a matter of course. It redounded to the credit of the present ministers, that they had instituted an inquiry in the other House; and that their lordships should pursue a similar course, was the object of the Amendment. This was the more necessary, as it now appeared, that little or no increase had taken place in the household expenses. The plea of the high price of provisions must therefore be given up; it was a milch cow that was milked dry. It now appeared, that the debts had principally arisen under the head of Occasional Payments, which were stated to

Digitized by Google

have been unforeseen. But if the late ministers found that the yearly revenue was insufficient for discharging the necessary expenses of the civil government, how did it happen that application was not sooner made to parliament? They must certainly have been fully aware, that this accumulation was a direct violation of the act of 1782. Mr. Burke could not have foreseen, that the spirit and letter of his act would have been so grossly violated; that a third secretary of state would be appointed; that this third secretary would be a noble duke who had supported his bill for the regulation of the Civil List; and that he would have assented to this accumulation of debt, in opposition to that measure, and to the direct terms of a protest against the payment of the civil list arrears in 1777. He was ready to meet the argument of the noble lord, as to the inadequacy of the Civil List to the purposes for which it was granted. He conceived that parliament and his majesty had, upon good grounds, at the time when the additional 100,000*l.* was granted, expressed their conviction that no farther debt would be incurred. Here his lordship entered into a calculation of the exonerations which had taken place, with respect to the charges on the Civil List during the last sixteen years, from the operation of the sinking fund; the direct reduction in the expense of the household in 1782; the separate establishment of four princes of the blood royal; and the reversion of the pensions given to two others since dead. These he stated at the sum of 200,000*l.* yearly, exclusive of the savings in Secret Service money, and various other charges which were now voted by parliament. Some of these he found under the head of Army Extraordinaries. He would, however, do the late ministers the justice to state, that they had all along taken out of the Civil List so much of the Secret Service money as was included in the estimate of 1782; amounting to 10,000*l.* for the home department, and 25,000*l.* for the foreign. But it was, at the same time, to be recollected, in a comparative view of the sufficiency of this fund, that the whole of the Secret Service money was charged upon it during the American war. When all these considerations were looked to, he would ask noble lords whether there was not good ground for inquiry into the cause of the present embarrassments. They were told that sufficient information was laid before them; but what kind of satisfaction could they derive from a mere statement, that certain sums had been paid under the head of Occasional Payments. It was certainly singular, that while a saving had taken place in other classes, this, which had, at its utmost limit, been fixed at 20,000*l.* should have so far exceeded that estimate as nearly to comprise the whole of the debt; for it amounted to no less a sum than 1,047,587*l.* This mode of keeping accounts reminded him of a story he had somewhere read, of a man who, finding himself living beyond his income, determined, by way of check upon his disposition to extravagance, to keep an account of his expenditure. He purchased an account-book, and resolved to be very particular in his items of expenditure; but on opening his book at the end of a week it contained but two items, viz.—"A lead pencil, 8*d.*; Sundries, 150*l.*" Thus it was with the accuracy of ministers: in details of trivial moment they were extremely minute; but, on the greatest head of extravagance, they lumped off an enormous sum under the head of "Occasional Payments." The noble lord then adverted to several of the items in the account; and repeated, that if exceedings upon some heads of expenditure were unavoidable, they were amply counter-balanced by exonerations and acquisitions to the civil list establishment. These were surely points for consideration, and arguments against the necessity of exceedings; and if parliament, in its liberality, should think proper to adopt a mode of clearing off those arrears, he saw no reason why it should be otherwise than the provision made for paying off the debts of the heir apparent. That illustrious personage, having to support high and splendid rank, with a confined income, became of consequence involved in debt; a grant is given for his disembarrassment, but inadequate to prevent new difficulties; and ministers, nevertheless, induce his highness to promise, for the future, to limit his expenditure within his income, which the style he had to support rendered impracticable. On his marriage ministers obtained for him an additional income of 120,000*l.*; but then they devote one half of it to a sinking fund to pay off his debts: to something of this sort, in the present instance, he would have no objection: but he could not understand the propriety of one law for the crown, and another for the heir apparent. Amongst other items, under

Digitized by Google

the head of Occasional Payments, he observed one of a large sum of money advanced by way of loan to the duke of York, to be repaid by instalments in six or seven years. But surely the act for limiting the civil list never meant to make that a money-lender: a loan surely could not be properly termed an occasional payment; Better call it a royal bounty at once, and provide for it in some other way. The noble lord concluded with declaring that, if the motion of his noble friend for inquiry were refused, he would vote against the payment of the arrear altogether.

The Earl of *Moira* said, he would vote for the Address; but in doing so he wished to be understood, as not precluding himself hereafter from asking information on this subject. He considered it a fit subject for an inquiry, that so many charges were made on the civil list which had no connexion whatever with that establishment. The household expenses of his majesty bore no proportion whatever to the other expenses. This was a point which ought to be clearly explained. In those infamous publications which had been dispersed through the country some years ago, for the most mischievous of purposes, great pains were taken to represent his majesty as possessing an income of a million a year. The effect those gross falsehoods had on the public mind was well known. He would tell the most enthusiastic of these demagogues, that the establishment of a monarchy was as economical as that which belonged to any republic whatever. He would appeal to the example of history in all ages and in all countries, and ask, whether the most galling and vexatious democracy that ever existed could conduct the affairs of its government with more economy than a monarchy? The annals of all nations, and the universal experience of mankind, warranted him in saying, that a democracy was the most lavish and extravagant of all governments. Milton had said, that the trappings of a king would support the whole expense of a republic. That great man must certainly have been blinded with enthusiasm, or guilty of gross adulation; for no government in this country was ever more expensive than the commonwealth under which he lived. The splendor and trappings of the crown were as useful to the state as they were conducive to the dignity of the monarch; yet these trappings formed but a very small part of the establishment. He would forbear saying any thing concerning the affairs of the prince; but he could not help observing, that the provisions for the younger branches of the royal family were much too small for their rank and situation in life. A degree of prodigality was required of them which it was impossible they could practise.

After some farther conversation, the question being put,—"That the words proposed to be left out, stand part of the question;" the House divided: Contents, 60; Not Contents, 4.

The Address was then agreed to.

Protest against the Address on the King's Message respecting the Civil List.] In consequence of the rejection of the Amendment, the following Protest was entered on the Journals:

"Dissentient,

"Because it is inconsistent with the duties of parliament to burthen the public purse with the unwarranted profusion of ministers of the crown, without examination, and without vouchers, especially as under the salutary provision of the 22nd of the king, it is difficult to imagine the possibility of sixteen years accumulation of debt without criminal contempt of the direction of the legislature.

"Because such sanction to unscrutinized accounts tends to violate the independence and depreciate the utility of parliament, at the same time that it exposes the crown to the reproach of a burthensome debt, which might possibly, on examination, be justified by necessity, or the public good.

(Signed) CARNARVON,
DUNDAS,
WENTWORTH FITZWILLIAM,
HOLLAND."

Debate on Mr. Manners Sutton's Motion relative to the Revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall.] March 31. Mr. *Manners Sutton* rose, to submit a motion to the House relative to the claims of the prince of Wales to the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall. In bringing forward this motion, he confidently relied on the justice of his cause, and on the calm, impartial, and dispassionate temper with which he trusted it would be entertained by the House. He confessed he was at a loss to discover what material objections could be urged against it; but while he fondly imagined that he thus saw his way clearly, a consciousness of his own in-

Digitized by Google

ability fully to discuss a question of such importance, filled him with an anxious wish that the performance of a task so arduous had fallen into more competent hands. But, in the situation which he had the honour to hold, he felt it incumbent on him to refer to some of the circumstances that had occurred when he had before the honour of addressing the House on this topic. In the course of that discussion a wish seemed to be expressed by the House that more satisfactory details might be entered into on the question then before them. He felt it consequently his duty to comply with that wish as far as he was able. The main object of his proposition was, that a committee should be appointed to inquire what sums arising from the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall have been received, and under what authority, since the birth of his royal highness till the period at which he attained the age of twenty-one; and what sums had been advanced to his royal highness up to the 27th of June 1795, towards the payment of his royal highness's debts. Should the House acquiesce in this motion, it would then be necessary for the committee to examine into the Journals of parliament, that lights might thence be derived to guide the judgment of the House, in deciding whether there was any thing so doubtful in point of law, or questionable in point of fact, as to make it necessary to refer to the courts of law, or to determine whether it was not fully competent for parliament to come to a decision on the question. Should the House agree to the appointment of a committee, there would then be two questions submitted to their consideration. First, whether his royal highness be or be not entitled to the arrears of the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall; and, whether, if he be, those arrears have not been expended for the public service?—But he should now proceed to advance some of the grounds upon which he imagined the claims of his royal highness to be founded. First, then, the claim of his royal highness was founded upon a grant of Edward 3rd to his son the Black Prince. He conveyed the duchy and its revenues to his son for his maintenance when that prince was only eight years of age. What Edward had in view by this grant was, to make over this property to his son, and to secure it to him independent of the crown, that the prince might be enabled to keep up that rank and splendor which were suitable to his exalted station. The consequence of this grant had been to vest the duchy in the prince of Wales from the moment of his birth. The prince of Wales is born duke of Cornwall, and entitled to livery of possession from the moment he is born; and he is declared of full age with regard to the revenues of the duchy from that moment. Such being the object and the operation of the grant, must it not appear extraordinary that the king should be entitled to hold the revenues of the duchy till the prince is of age, without being under any necessity of rendering an account of them? But, when he said that it must appear somewhat extraordinary that the king should be entitled thus to hold them, he hoped it would be distinctly understood, that there existed not the least controversy between his royal highness and his majesty on the subject of these revenues. His majesty had not received them for his own use, nor did he withhold an account of them. Far otherwise: if any serious difference of opinion had arisen between these illustrious personages, if his majesty had really received those revenues and resisted the payment of them, neither he nor any person acting under the auspices of his royal highness would ever have been permitted by his royal highness to have agitated such a question even for a moment. He must, therefore, entreat the House to understand that in what he had to offer on this topic, he was speaking only abstractedly; and in speaking thus he might be permitted to say, that it was rather extraordinary that, after a grant had been so made, the king or any other person should receive the property and revenues of the duchy. Yet doubts had been entertained upon this point by men of super-eminent legal talents; and doubts from such men were entitled to the greatest deference. Yet, with all the weight so justly due to such authorities, he could not bring himself to believe that they had ever pronounced a decided opinion upon the matter. They had contented themselves with stating their doubts, and had done no more. One doubt was, whether the king as guardian of his children, had not a just claim upon the revenues of the duchy? This doubt, however, was soon abandoned; for it was understood that guardianship in chivalry applies only to nonage; and this unfair and oppressive prin-

Digitized by Google

ciple of guardianship was no doubt abolished by the act of Charles 2nd. By this act it was conceived, that all the feudal system was swept away; yet if, for the sake of argument, it be admitted that it was not, still the guardianship in chivalry is not applicable to the present case. Another doubt was, whether the king by his prerogative, or some other attribute, was not entitled to receive the revenues of the duchy. But, if there be any thing of prerogative in the case, must it not arise out of the grant itself? That this, however, is not the fact, will appear from a reference to the several reigns that have succeeded the reign of Edward 3rd. The first grant was made by Edward 3rd to his son, the Black Prince. Upon his demise, his son, afterwards Richard 2nd had livery of possession of the duchy. When Henry 4th ascended the throne his son had livery of possession, though then only ten years of age. Henry 5th died abroad, when his son was no more than eight month old, and then there was no time to give him livery of possession. But the reign of Edward 6th afforded by far the most decisive case. In 1453, his eldest son, afterwards Henry 6th, was born. In 1455, an act was passed, stating that as his son was born duke of Cornwall, and as he had right of possession, there should be delivered to him (as to his eldest son) the lands, rents, and revenues of the duchy, that he might enjoy the same in as full a manner as they had been enjoyed by his predecessor, Edward the Black Prince. The act then recites, that as he was under age he should have certain persons to act for him. It next enacts, that from the 12th of November 1455, the king shall have the rents and revenues of the duchy, till the prince shall attain the age of fourteen, deducting certain sums to be applied to purposes specified in the act. In 1459, the council of the prince presented a petition to the king, complaining that the duchy had been materially dismembered, and praying that as his son was duke of Cornwall, and as such entitled to the rents of the duchy, he might enjoy those rents and revenues in as complete a manner as they have been enjoyed by any of his predecessors. This petition was moreover stated to be a petition of right. It was discussed in parliament, and, with the advice of parliament, the king acquiesced in its prayer. What is the legitimate inference to be drawn from this precedent? Evidently, that the king had no prerogative that empowered him to receive those rents. If he was vested with such a prerogative, why make any application to parliament? Why were terms stipulated? Why comply with a petition so worded, and thus called a petition of right? But as the king assented to it, the learned gentleman conceived that this assent proved his second proposition, namely, that the king's eldest son has a right to the duchy. Surely he should not here be told that Henry 6th was a weak prince: for, granting that he was, did the charge of weakness apply also to his parliament, who advised him to comply with the petition? Indeed, here the learned gentleman thought he might safely rest the justice of his case. But he felt anxious to state other instances, with a view of removing every possible ground of doubt. In the year 1472, Edward 4th, by the advice of his privy council, granted the duchy and livery of possession to his son, then only eight months or a year old. The patent recites, the eldest sons, being born dukes of Cornwall, are in that capacity entitled to livery of possession. These were the exact words: this charter of livery was ratified and confirmed by the consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and also by the Commons; which proves beyond a doubt, that there this no nonage with regard to the duchy. In 1495, upon the accession of Henry 7th to the throne, he had no son born, and the revenues of the duchy were vested in himself. But it was at the same time expressly ordered, that if he had a son, he should enjoy the duchy, rents, &c. in as full a manner as any of his predecessors. The property of this duchy seems to be held by an extraordinary limitation; it remains with the king when he has no son, but it goes to the son the moment he is born, and again reverts to the king should the son die. King Henry appointed certain sums out of the rents of the duchy for the relief of his subjects from some grievance of purveyance. The next year a son was born to him, and the king immediately gives him livery of possession, and acknowledges that he is of full age. It was the opinion of justice Doddridge, that the king's eldest son is not only of age, but that the king is by law forced to give him possession as if he were of perfect age. In 1486, prince Arthur was born, and had livery of possession given him immediately

Digitized by Google

after his birth. An act was also passed, repealing the assessment that had been made of certain sums from the duchy towards the relief of the subject from the grievance of purveyance, and the receiver was directed no longer to pay them. On the death of prince Arthur in 1502, Henry, afterwards Henry 8th became duke of Cornwall, and was discharged from being duke of York, because, in the former capacity, he had great and valuable possessions. Large fines, which had been levied in the duchy, were also put to the account of the prince. Henry 8th's son was of course born duke of Cornwall; but when his charter of possession was made out he could not precisely say. In the reigns of Edward 6th Mary, and Elizabeth, there was no son.—The learned gentleman next proceeded to the reign of James 1st. There it was supposed that some very formidable objection would be found to the prince's claims. He had given the subject much attention, but, notwithstanding, he was unable to discover any circumstances in that reign that militated against, but, on the contrary, many that plead in favour of, the right. James 1st was indeed anxious to withhold this property from his son; and had it not been for the character and conduct of justice Doddridge, who was his adviser, his son might have long been out of possession. An act was at length passed, which recites that the eldest sons of the king were entitled to become dukes of Cornwall: and hereby the king is forced to admit the right, and to confess that *eo instante* his eldest son is from his birth duke of Cornwall.—The reign next to be touched upon was that of Charles 1st. When he granted livery of possession to his son was not clear. Charles 2nd had no issue, and James 2nd abdicated the throne. William 3rd and Ann had no issue. When George 2nd came to the throne, his son was under age, but, immediately on his coming of age, an account was rendered him of the revenues of the duchy, from the time of his father's accession. Surely, a case of such modern period was well calculated to remove all doubt. In 1760, his present majesty ascended the throne, and, in 1762, the prince of Wales was born. From the instant of his birth his title commenced, and was perfected. As duke of Cornwall, he was entitled to the revenues of the duchy. No act was deemed necessary—no charter of livery required—since the act of Charles 2nd. After the birth of his royal highness, an act was passed enabling the king to grant leases of lands in the duchy, and that act recites, that "whereas the prince is seized of the duchy of Cornwall." What is the meaning of this seizing, but that his royal highness's right to the revenue was the same as that of his predecessors?—These were among the prominent circumstances on which were founded the rights and claims of his royal highness; and if any doubts rested upon them, was it not most advisable to have them duly examined into by parliament? All the cases referred to appear uniform and consistent in support of the validity of the claim; and it was difficult to see upon what grounds the appointment of a committee could be resisted. Is it to be objected, that in some reigns the king has not granted livery of possession as regularly as he ought? Or, if so, does this irregularity weigh in the least against the title? and will it be wondered at, if the relation that subsists between the monarch and the heir apparent be duly considered? Now, let it be asked, whether the public have received the revenues of the duchy? If the proposed committee be appointed, it will soon appear, that all revenues, except a small sum of 12,000*l.* and of 16,000*l.* were carried to the Treasury, which the late chancellor of the exchequer would not be disposed to deny, for that right hon. gentleman stated, in 1795, that the revenues of the duchy had been applied in aid of the civil list, and as such were recognized by parliament. If now the title of his royal highness appears so clearly made out, will the House compel him to resort to legal means in order to establish his right? Indeed, it appears so clear, that no candid man can deny its justice—no honest man resist it. And here the learned gentleman begged leave to remind the House of the manner in which the present discussion had arisen: it did not arise in consequence of any complaint, nor of any demand, on the part of his royal highness: it was entered into by the House itself. It should also be recollected, that one material object with his royal highness was, to take no step that could embarrass the decision of the question respecting the civil list, or tend to excite the slightest degree of contest. There was another, and, he trusted, a laudable motive, which actuated his royal highness in bringing forward the question: that motive was, that he might stand well in

Digitized by Google

the eye of the public, and show that, if his rights had been duly acknowledged, he should have been no burthen on the people: that his expenses, whether incurred prudently or otherwise, would all have fallen upon himself.—Mr. Sutton described the situation to which his royal highness had been reduced, in consequence of his not having enjoyed what he conceived to be his just right. He was compelled to slide into retirement and obscurity, and to see the exalted station and rank to which he was born, disrobed of the splendor and magnificence that were due to it. He should anticipate how the committee, if appointed, would view the question; but if the result of their inquiry tended to confirm the claims of his royal highness, he should then have to propose that the surplus of the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall should be applied to the discharge of his royal highness's debts. The learned gentleman concluded with moving, "That a select committee be appointed to inquire what sums of money are due to his royal highness the prince of Wales, from the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall—by whom, and by what authority, its revenues have been received from the birth of his royal highness until he attained the age of twenty-one, and how these sums have been applied? Also, what sums of money have been advanced to his royal highness from the time he came of age until the the 27th of June, 1795, for the discharge of his royal highness's debts."

Sir *Ralph Milbank* heartily agreed with every sentiment which had been uttered by his learned friend. He wished his royal highness should have fair justice done to his claims; and he saw no mode which offered the means of obtaining that justice so well as the one now proposed.

Mr. *Fuller* said, it appeared by the Journals, that Mr. Humphrey Morris, a member of the House, having been appointed warden of the stannaries in 1763, a motion was made for a new writ; but which, after a debate, was rejected; it being determined that the office was not a place under the crown. It was to be inferred, therefore, that the prince of Wales was seized at that time of the duchy of Cornwall.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, he did not know how he could give a stronger proof of the confidence he felt in the motives and principles which actuated his own conduct, than in rising now and delivering his sentiments, after so clear a statement of the case, and so able an address as had been made by his hon. and learned friend. In many parts of that speech, though there was much to admire, his learned friend did not convey conviction to his mind. He had stated, with great ability the right of the prince of Wales to the duchy of Cornwall; and he had stated it as attaching to the prince from the moment of his birth, in like manner as if he were of full age; but, whether or not the right was so indisputable as the hon. and learned gentleman had contended, there were considerations which operated upon his judgment, and rendered it impossible for him to assent to the motion now made. His learned friend had assumed the right of the prince of Wales to the revenue of the duchy from his birth; but he meant to go into the committee upon very precise words, as they appeared in his motion, which was to inquire "under what authority, and so forth," together with a power to search for precedents, for the purpose of investigating the grounds on which he rested the claims of the prince of Wales, as they might appear on the Journals of parliament. But, he would ask, could such a motion be submitted to that House consistently with any authorized precedent? What did it amount to? That the committee should have the power of examining the Journals of that House; for his learned friend could not expect the House would enter on the second part of the subject previous to its disposing of the first, namely, that of taking any account of the revenues of the duchy. His learned friend proposed that investigation of the Journals which, he said, would satisfy the committee, and whose report on that subject would satisfy the House, of the propriety of the claims of his royal highness; and after that investigation, his learned friend proposed that the House, being satisfied of the right, should proceed to take an account of the revenues of the duchy; a combination of duties intended to be imposed upon that House, never before included in any motion that ever was adopted by, or indeed, he believed, submitted to it. His learned friend had gone through a very ample field of precedents, in which he was not disposed to follow him; nor, in his view of the subject, was it necessary; for he thought his learned friend had fallen into a fundamental error, not from want of

Digitized by Google

ability, but from not having applied his talents to the subject in the way in which he conceived it ought to be considered, and particularly according to the practice of the last two centuries. His learned friend contended, that the effect of the act of Charles 2nd, which he quoted, was to abolish tenures, as he had stated the case to apply to the claim of the prince of Wales to the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall. He had great respect for the opinion of his learned friend; but there were others for whose opinion he had also great respect, and which opinion was contrary to that expressed by his learned friend; the technical expression of which was, that in this case of guardianship, in chivalry, the guardian while the ward is declared to be seized, until application for release, being in possession, has a right to the rents and profits belonging to the ward: that the guardian was entitled to the profits and revenues after seizin and until livery is demanded, &c. This was applicable to the case of the prince of Wales. There was no demand of livery made on his behalf, as duke of Cornwall, during his minority. This he understood to be a point of law, on which opinions of the highest authority were adverse to this claim. He was not prepared to give a decided opinion upon it; it was not necessary he should; it was enough for him to know that doubts were entertained by those who were much better qualified than he could pretend to be to form an opinion on it: knowing that these doubts were entertained, he thought it improper to take the step now recommended; for until it was found, that legal redress out of that House was unattainable, he should think the House would be going out of its proper course, by entering on an investigation of the subject. He did not presume to state what these means for legal redress might be, but this he knew, that some of the best informed men were of opinion, that a petition of right was the proceeding proper to be adopted in this case. His learned friend's second head of observations was one on which a few words ought to be bestowed; and here the question was, whether the public had received the revenues and profits of the duchy of Cornwall? This was a part of the case which had about it considerable delicacy. Where was the proof that any part of the duchy of Cornwall had been directly applied to the service of the public? Was the proof to be found in the Journals of parliament? He knew, that during the minority of the prince of Wales, sums of money arising from the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall, had been voted to be applied to the purposes of the civil list, and that 94,000*l.* of this property came under the head of public services. The House would recollect what the circumstances were which attended this transaction, and they would be fully aware, that it did not always follow that a sum intended to be applied for the public service could be said to be actually for the public service. He was entitled to call on gentlemen who contended, that this claim was a claim upon the public, in consequence of the application of the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall to the use of the public, to show from documents, how and when that application of that revenue took place? His learned friend had stated a wish, on the part of the prince of Wales, to give satisfaction to the public. Whoever had the happiness to be acquainted with his royal highness must be well aware of the truth of that assertion. It was a pleasure to the public to reflect, that such sentiments were entertained by that illustrious prince. It must give satisfaction to every good man that his royal highness had an anxiety to stand well in the opinion of the public. Any man who could entertain a contrary feeling or a different wish, must be void of honour, dead to every generous impression, and ought to be branded as a monster and held up to the scorn of the public. But this was not mere matter of personal anxiety, even in his royal highness, manly and virtuous as that feeling was; that the prince of Wales should stand well in the opinion and affection of the public, was a matter in which the public itself was interested. But the learned gentleman had stated, that if this matter was fully investigated, it would appear, that when the sums which his royal highness had received were put in opposition to what he was entitled to, his royal highness had not been the occasion of any burthen to the public. Now, as to the state of accounts in this particular, as they applied to sums voted, he had occasion to lay them before the House on a former occasion, in stating the circumstances of the civil list; but he could not consent to the course of proceeding proposed by the motion now before the

Digitized by Google

House; and he called on the House to do him the justice to believe, that he had but one object in view, and that was to arrive at truth. The motion was of two parts; that of deciding upon the question of right, and that of taking the account. Upon the subject of the right, he had stated what had occurred to him by way of answer to the application to the House: he believed it to be by means of a petition of right: he must, however, not be understood to recommend that, or any other proceeding. As to the statement of the account, it appeared that the sums issued for his royal highness out of the civil list were monies which arose out of a fixed allowance, and which it was unnecessary to trouble the House with the detail of; there was an aggregate of 128,481*l.* there was besides an extraordinary allowance of 50,550*l.* a further sum between the prince of Wales and the duke of York, of 32,000*l.* the proportion of which that fell to the share of the prince was more than a moiety, but the amount of the advances in the year 1783 was 211,390*l.* Now, deducting 16,000*l.* of this aggregate, there would then have been received by the prince at the period he alluded to, upwards of 195,000*l.* This was applicable only to twelve years of the nonage of the prince of Wales. He believed the average of the allowance of his royal highness during the rest of his minority was 13,000*l.* a year, so that the whole sum was 233,764*l.* for nine years. When the prince of Wales came of age, there was a grant made to him out of the civil list, of 50,000*l.* for his revenue, and which was received by his royal highness until the year 1787, at that period an augmentation of the revenue of his royal highness took place out of the civil list, which was then raised to 60,000*l.* per annum. The whole amount from that period to the 5th of January 1802, was 865,000*l.* The whole sum advanced out of the civil list to the prince of Wales, since he came of age, was 1,725,000*l.* out of which there might be particular items deducted; such as the sum laid out on Carlton-house and some other arrangements that were made, the particulars of which were laid minutely before parliament in 1795. But, under all the circumstances of the affairs of his royal highness, supposing the advances which were made on the one hand, and the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall taken on the other, without touching the question of right, he doubted very much the accuracy of the calculation by which it was found that a considerable balance would be in favour of the prince of Wales. It could not but be matter of joy to the House to hear, that his royal highness intended to appropriate any thing he might receive, to the payment of his debts. The station of heir apparent of the crown, was so high and so onerous, that it perhaps required more than was allowed to him when he came of age. It was much to be wished, for the sake of the feeling and comfort of his royal highness, and indeed upon public grounds it was desirable, that he should be put in possession, as soon as possible, of the means which were granted by parliament. It was to be desired by the public, that every branch of the royal family should be supported with splendor, for the public was interested in that very appearance; and, however the oddity of the expression might excite a smile, he was of opinion, there was much sense in what was once said at the bar of the House of Lords by sir Fletcher Norton, namely, that all the branches of the royal family should be supported with a degree of splendor peculiar to themselves —that their affluence ought to be a conspicuous feather in the cap of state; it was a feeling proper to be cherished by a statesman, for respect to splendor was founded in the nature of man. It was his earnest wish that the payment of the debts of his royal highness should be accelerated as much as possible. It was with considerable reluctance that he opposed a measure that had for its object the attainment of so desirable an end. He knew it might be said, that a guardian, or a father, was not at liberty to make use of what might be left to his son during his minority, but that he was to apply it to the nurture and education of the infant during his minority, and account to him, when he came of age; but, considering the circumstances which attended the creation of the prince of Wales, for the first time duke of Cornwall, which was that of Edward the Black Prince, he thought it hardly possible to conceive, that it was then intended the whole revenue of the duchy of Cornwall should be appropriated by the duke of it, and yet that the king should have all the charge of the maintenance of such prince during his minority. He was not saying that the claim was unfounded; if it was a claim fit to be made, it was fit to be

Digitized by Google

adopted, and ought to be so without delay. But a doubt was entertained on the subject. In 1783, when the duke of York came of age, there was much difference of opinion on the subject of the title of his royal highness, as now insisted on; and it was matter of surprise that the claims, as they were now stated, had so long escaped the vigilance of so many able men as had their attention so particularly called to this subject. He did not think he should be justified, under the present circumstances, in recommending to the House the adoption of this motion. There was one general objection, that of its blending two objects, in themselves naturally distinct, the question of right and the question of account. But his leading objection was this, that wherever there was a wrong in this country, there must be some redress. Such a point, in his opinion, ought not to be entertained in that House. If it had appeared in proof, that no application for redress could be made elsewhere, or had been made elsewhere in vain, it would then be time enough to apply to that House; but in the present posture of this case, he must oppose this motion, as one which did not come under the legitimate functions of that House. Nothing but absolute necessity could justify its adoption. He was unwilling to negative such a proposition as this, because it might be made a question elsewhere; but he could not support it, and would conclude with moving, "That the other orders of the day be now read."

Mr. *Erskine* rose to support the motion, and maintained that the length of time that had elapsed from the origin of the grant to the present period, was no answer to the claim, and if the law was clear, the House would be so far from being out of its course in entertaining the motion, that it would be in the direct discharge of its duty to the public. The only proper way of ascertaining the law upon the subject would be by referring it to a committee; and if upon the report, the matter appeared to be doubtful, it would be then time enough for the House to say so, by declining to proceed any farther. Mr. Erskine then took an historical review of the statutes and other records, from the time of the grant of Edward 3rd, to the Black Prince downwards; all of which, he said, were in favour of the right, and that it appeared from the statute of Henry 6th, that the king himself at that period, as well as the parliament, considered the right of the prince of Wales to the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall to be clear and unquestionable. This, indeed, was obvious by that king coming himself in person to his parliament when the prince was only two years of age, to take some of it away, but still more from the petition of right decided two years afterwards, when the entire revenues were restored. This was a full recognition of the right, by parliament, and by a monarch whose interest and disposition to the contrary had been so manifest; and this decision, without a whisper to the contrary, remained untouched to the present hour.—It was true, that when Charles 1st was prince of Wales, it became a question, whether he was so entitled, but his title was only doubted upon the legal construction of *filius primogenitus*.—In the present instance there was but one point for consideration; viz. whether these parliamentary proceedings and other documents were sufficiently satisfactory, or whether a doubt remained for the decision of another tribunal. For his own part, he thought them absolutely conclusive, and consequently a sufficient foundation for the determination of the House without further controversy. He then went through the history of livery of seisin as dependent upon tenure until abolished by the 12th of Charles 1st, and said, that no prince of Wales had had livery of the duchy of Cornwall.—George 2nd, when prince of Wales, had no livery of seisin; his present majesty had none, and the present prince of Wales had none.—The claim, therefore, was not a doubtful one to be settled by a legal decision, but one that had been recognized for ages, and confirmed by repeated acts of parliament. Indeed, the only reason for asking the aid of the House of Commons was, because, though a petition of right had for a long time been prepared, difficulties had occurred in its progress; the best endeavours had been employed, but no certain advance had been hitherto made towards a decision.—With regard to the account, he would say nothing, except that it was on all hands agreed, if the right were found to be with the prince, that his royal highness had not, in any period of his life, been the smallest burthen to the public.

The *Master of the Rolls* observed, that the proposition of his learned friend had

Digitized by Google

been submitted to the House with every possible advantage which could arise from luminous statement, or a display of the soundest judgment and discretion. However he felt himself under the necessity of opposing the proposition, it was impossible not to feel respect for the motives by which it had been suggested, and he was ready at once to allow that the anxiety of his royal highness for the discussion of his claims, arose much more from a wish that the real state of the account betwixt him and the public might be ascertained, than with any hope of immediate advantage. Still, however, the proposition was one which called upon the House to exercise judicial functions and legal investigations; and no disposition, however strong, to display marks of affection to his royal highness, should induce the House, consistently with the order of their proceedings, to entertain such a discussion. Discussions collateral with the general subject now under consideration might indeed be introduced, but they were wholly unnecessary, and for this reason he would not enter into them on the present occasion. On a similar principle, he would forbear to give any opinion on the claims of his royal highness, for if it should hereafter be found expedient to institute some legal inquiries, it might perhaps fall to his lot to assist in framing the decision which might be given; and sure he was that he would enter on any such investigation without the smallest portion of bias on his mind. True it was, that in 1795 he had, when the general subject of his royal highness's affairs were under consideration, expressed doubts how far the claims in question could be legally substantiated; but it would be recollected that he had, on the same occasion, confessed that he was far from being possessed of documents sufficient to found any decided opinion. As he had alluded to this period, he could not omit pressing upon the attention of the House, that at that period not a single individual, as far as his recollection extended, had held such high language on the subject of the claims as that which was now employed. Even an hon. general who had taken a very active part in the discussion, had not spoken of them in such terms, nor was a proposition then made by him for introducing a clause into the bill then framed, instructing the prince's commissioners to institute suits for the recovery of debts due to the prince on his revenues in the duchy of Cornwall. His learned friend had contended, that the claim of his royal highness was a legal claim, by which nothing else could, with any propriety, be meant, than a claim founded on principles of law. If this, then, was the case, what had the House to do with the discussion? Was it by a committee of the House that the rights of property were to be tried? He wished his learned friend to state, what was the kind of jurisdiction which they were to exercise on this point. In the first place, the existence of the right was fully asserted, and then a committee of the House was to be converted into a court of judicature to decide on its validity. If the case had been doubtful, it was allowed that it ought to be referred to a regular court of judicature; but he would contend, that if every member were convinced that the right did exist, the House could not accede to the proposition. If the doctrine held on the other side were once admitted, and if the House were thus to take upon itself to decide what rights were clear; would there, he asked, be any protection against the grossest infringements on property of every description?—The House, it was said, was never to interfere, except when the case submitted to their consideration was perfectly clear; but how false and dangerous did such a declaration appear when applied to analogous circumstances. Did it not daily happen, that in one court of judicature, a point appeared quite clear, which, on being considered by the court of review, seemed altogether as ambiguous and obscure? Suppose a point were decided a hundred times, and a litigant chose to think it clear in his favour, would that be any ground for him to come to the House and demand their decision? Did not his learned friend who spoke last in every term submit motions to a court of judicature, on points which almost all the profession allowed were unanswerably clear? It thus appeared, then, that the grand argument for the adoption of the proposition, from the clearness of the prince's claims, was totally fallacious, and therefore any farther objection might perhaps be considered as an act of supererogation. He would, however, shortly advert to another part of the argument of his learned friend. He had no hesitation in admitting the truth of all that was said about the prince of Wales being lord of the duchy of Cornwall at the moment of his birth; but, unfortunately,

Digitized by Google

one of the doubts which might be entertained, arose at the time when their discussions ceased. No one doubted the truth of this general proposition; it was clear from the acts of parliament which had been quoted. It was not, therefore, that he had doubts on this point that he resisted the appointment of a committee; but it was the livery at an early age, when the prince of Wales was in a state of incapacity to exercise any function of life, which formed the grand subject of doubt. During the continuance of this state of incapacity, the whole management of the revenues necessarily devolved on his majesty, by whom alone every thing respecting them was to be directed. Not a single officer employed in the collection of these revenues was subject to any control but that of the sovereign, nor could carry what he had collected to any place but to the Treasury. To the king exclusively belonged the management of the education of the infant prince; and he it was who was to determine on the propriety of every article of expenditure. The question then came to be, did his majesty exercise these powers subject to control, or were they a part of his prerogative, free from every inquiry? It might be argued by those who deny that the king exercised these powers exclusively by his prerogative, that an account of the distribution of the revenues might be obtained. But how this was to be accomplished, he was at a loss to conceive. It was obvious, that it was not here, as in other cases of the investigation of accounts, where the distribution of the particular sums in question might be censured as unfit, as unnecessary, or extravagant. Here, he who took the account, and he by whom the disbursements were made, was one and the same; and therefore any examination which took place was idle and nugatory, because wholly without effect. The question, however, which the committee would have to resolve would be, whether the king was or was not accountable for the disbursement of the revenues? for that, he conceived, was the plain import of the words in the motion which empowered them to inquire under what authority the different sums had been received or expended. It made no difference as to this point whether his majesty, the public, or the civil list, were supposed to have received the benefit of the revenues; for, if his majesty was not accountable, neither could any responsibility be attached to the civil list or to the public. If any restoration was to be made to his royal highness, it could only be on the principle that the revenues had not been applied to the purposes intended. The question, therefore, in this view, resolved itself into the same thing as to the object of the committee's inquiries. What, besides, was to be the result of the opinion which the committee (supposing it to be appointed) might form? Was it to bind the present king, or was its influence also to extend to future kings? Was it, on the idea of its being unfavourable to the prince's claims, to deprive his royal highness of the privilege of applying for redress to a regular court of judicature, or to prevent future princes of Wales from asserting their rights; or was it to be of that description which was to leave it to the option of future princes of Wales to try the fate of another appeal to the House, or to a court of judicature? All these considerations ought to be well weighed before the House consented to appoint a committee. To induce the House to comply with the proposition, his learned friend (Mr. Erskine) had supposed that the difficulties of enforcing his royal highness's claims were so formidable that they could be ascertained in no other mode. He would not say that there were no difficulties in obtaining legal redress, but at present he declined giving any opinion. Whether such a remedy did, or did not exist, was as much a legal question, as a decision on the validity of the claims. If it could be shown that no legal remedy existed, this might be a fair ground for removing particular obstruction, but was no reason for the House taking the decision in the first instance into its own hands. Such interference as this was what the House was every day resorting to; and to raise particular statutes for the purpose of giving a remedy to an evil of very grievous pressure, was strictly consistent with their legislative powers. If, on application to the courts of judicature, it should be found that his royal highness had no legal remedy, then a question would naturally arise, how far it was proper for the House to interfere, for the purpose of removing obstacles in the way of legal redress. This position might be illustrated by numerous analogies. It frequently happened, that certain legal obstacles stood in the way of a cause being brought to trial, and by an application to a court of equity this obstacle was removed; but in such cases the court came

Digitized by Google

to no decision. It merely removed obstructions to the regular course of law, and never went beyond what actual necessity demanded. The House, he imagined, were now pretty well in possession of his objections to the appointment of a committee. He did not oppose it, either because he was convinced that the claims of his royal highness were right, or because he held a contrary opinion; he had already stated, that on this point, he at present gave no decision. What he specifically objected to in the appointment of the committee was, that if the House consented to entertain the proposition, they would be assuming judicial power, to the exercise of which, on such occasions, they were incompetent, either on the principles or the practice of the constitution.

Mr. *Fox* confessed, he understood the question in a light considerably different from that in which it seemed to be viewed by most of those who had delivered their opinions. If he rightly understood the words of the motion, the object of the committee was not only very different from what the last speaker had supposed, but from what seemed very generally to prevail in the House. The motion did not seem to him to contain a single word of law, or a point of opinion, but related solely to the investigation of facts. The facts which the committee were to be directed to inquire into were, what was the nature of the orders by which particular revenues were levied and expended? Were they warrants from the Treasury, or from what other office did they originate? Such was his understanding of the object of the committee; and in this he could discover nothing of legal difficulty. He could, therefore, safely vote against passing to the order of the day; for if doubts of a legal kind existed, it was proper that they should be removed. Viewing the question as referring merely to facts, he begged to consider what these facts presented which called for the consideration of the House? It might be said, of what use was it to inquire into facts if there was no intention of grounding on them some subsequent proceeding? To this the answer was obvious. The consideration of the subject had come before the House from his royal highness in the character of a public creditor. He had stated his claims; he had desired the House to ascertain the quantum of what was due to him; he had called upon them, after this investigation, to discharge a debt owing from the public. If the committee, on their report, should state that the claims of his royal highness were just, the House would then be bound to discharge those claims; not by a judicial act, but by a legislative enactment. In this view, the statement of his learned friend (Mr. Erskine), with regard to the clearness of his royal highness's rights, was of the highest importance. He had heard every statement of the learned mover fully corroborated by his hon. friend, and the grand position which they had laid down of the right of the prince of Wales to the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall, from the moment of his birth, was not denied by those who had spoken on the other side. If this, then, was admitted, all that he contended for was at once given up. If it was allowed to be the fair interpretation of the various acts of parliament which had been quoted, that the prince, from the time of his birth, was entitled to enjoy these revenues as much as if he had arrived to the age of maturity, why was it that he was not to enjoy the same advantages during his minority, that wards were entitled to under common circumstances? In one part of the speech of the learned gentleman who spoke last, it was not denied that it was a subject which, at some time or other, ought to be discussed. It was allowed that the case was analogous, because guardians were, in common circumstances, liable to a strict inquiry into their conduct, while the revenues admitted to be the unquestionable property of the heir apparent, were appropriated without any similar species of control on the mode of its disbursement. If ever a case for legislative interference did exist, this was surely one. But he could not so easily admit that the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall were subject to no control; and, in support of a contrary opinion, he referred to the statute passed in the first year of the prince of Wales's age, in the reign of Henry 6th, by which, for certain specified purposes, the king was empowered to appropriate the revenues, and that passed four years after, by which the former act was repealed. He was ready to admit that there existed many useless statutes; but of all the statutes he had ever heard of, this last was the most useless, if it did not mean that the king was to be accountable to the prince for whatever sums the revenues afforded.—He next alluded to the manner in which the claim of prince

Digitized by Google

Charles was decided; and contended, that the mode of decision in that case, was one which, even at the time it took place, was unjustifiable; but which, if it were to take place under the present circumstances of this country, and in the present more perfect state of the constitution, could not fail to be regarded as flagrant in the highest degree. When he heard gentlemen on the other side so strenuously contending against the proposed mode of deciding on his royal highness's claims, he was astonished that no learned gentleman should venture to hazard an opinion on what he conceived to be a legal question. In his own opinion, the strongest possible argument which could be used against the proposed mode, would be to point out another mode in which the prince's claims could be urged in a less exceptionable manner. On this point, however, they had chosen to say nothing, and had contented themselves with general objections. The learned gentleman who spoke last had said, that during the infancy of the prince, his majesty was necessarily the sole director of his affairs, and was subject to no sort of control. No man was a greater admirer of English laws than he was; every new opportunity which presented itself of studying their character served but to increase his admiration of the excellence of their spirit, for he did not mean when he said this to allude to particular statutes: but, in common with every other human production, they would be allowed to partake of defects, and one of the most striking of these defects was that to which he had alluded. The want of a provision on this subject was undoubtedly a subject of regret, and was productive of some degree of difficulty. Supposing the case of an infant heir to the crown, while no oath of allegiance was framed, perhaps it might be difficult to determine to whom allegiance was due; but, if called upon to give an opinion on such a case, gentlemen on the other side would probably admit, that it was due to the feeble infant whose hands were unable to wield the sceptre. In the same manner, when he was asked, how the infant prince, who, from the moment of his birth, was allowed to be the possessor of the revenues of Cornwall, was to enjoy what was admitted to be his property? He might be at a loss to give a satisfactory answer; he would not, however, feel himself entitled to say that these revenues were not to be appropriated for the prince's use in riper years. In coming to the history of more modern times, it appeared that the sums which had been received in the first years of George 2nd. had been paid over to Frederic prince of Wales, for those years which had elapsed, from the time of the accession till he had reached his majority. With all these cases therefore in view, reflecting on the variety of evidence by which his royal highness's claims were supported, he had no sort of doubt on his mind on the subject. But if he had no doubt on the validity of his royal highness's claims, he had still less even a glimmering of hope that they would ever be enforced by any other mode of application. As a general proposition, he not merely admitted, but contended for, the necessity of keeping the judicial and legislative powers totally distinct and independent of each other; but he could not allow that, in no circumstances, this general rule could be suspended. In every country, under every form of legislation in the practice of senates or of parliaments, circumstances have sometimes occurred where the ends of substantial justice required that forms should give way, and the legislative body should assume the powers of judicial discussion. Was this, then, one of the cases which would justify such an interference, such an extraordinary exercise of authority? The rights of the first subject in this country were left in a situation which deprived him of the advantages they were calculated to afford, and no adequate remedy was provided by the constitution. Under similar circumstances there could be no doubt that every means would be used to give relief to a private individual, and was the heir apparent to be denied that redress which the legislature was so ready to afford to the community at large? The mode of stating the claim of his royal highness to be on the public and not on his majesty, he granted was highly decorous, but it by no means altered the substance of the question. His majesty had appropriated the revenues which were the property of his royal highness, not indeed to the support of his privy purse, but in aid of the civil list. To this amount, consequently, the public had reaped the advantages of this appropriation. If his royal highness came forward to make any claim, he had two parties against him; his majesty, who had diverted the revenues to other purposes, and the public, who had reaped the be-

Digitized by Google

nefit of this mode of distribution. Superadded to all this, he was to be told, that the king was entitled to make whatever distribution he thought proper, without being liable to any account, and that the public were not to be called upon to refund the sums which had been appropriated to their service. There was one sum of 90,000*l.* derived from the prince's revenues, and expended for special service, which was perhaps not of this particular description. A right hon. gentleman had hinted a suspicion, that it was applied for purposes that were bad—purposes injurious to the public. Not only was his royal highness to be deprived of his revenues, but, what an honour was to be conferred on him in the mode of depriving him of his property! No less a sum than 90,000*l.* is applied for special services; but the public has reaped the benefit. Not a bit of benefit has the public received from this application; but the prince is told, "Do not think of it: if the money has been applied even for purposes of corruption, this is a matter quite unworthy of notice, and cannot surely, for a moment, ruffle your royal highness's feelings!" What was this but adding an insult to injury? What was it but endeavouring to sport with him who had such serious grounds of complaint? He conjured the House to consider, that they stood in the character of debtors, applied to by their creditor, who required the liquidation of his claims: for that purpose, he wished their amount to be ascertained; he desired to know how his revenues had been collected, and under what authority they had been expended. This was one of the great questions, on which, if any legal difficulties existed, parliament was to act as referrees; and in assuming this character, they would only be doing what was by no means uncommon even in the best times of our history. Every one knew that it was no uncommon thing for the House to declare what the law was on great constitutional points. To refer to no other instance, the decision of the House, declaring the illegality of general warrants, was an instance never to be forgotten. It might be said, that no precedents could be found to sanction the interference for which he contended; but to this he would answer, that the *onus probandi* lay with those who argued against the proposition now under consideration. In support of what he contended for, it was found, *de facto*, that the prince of Wales, from the time of his birth, was the possessor of the revenues of Cornwall; while, on the other hand, it was not found that the king had any power to appropriate them to any other purpose than the use of the prince. Putting the case of the whole of these revenues being appropriated to the support of the privy purse of his majesty, what was the situation in which, by such a distribution, a prince of Wales would be placed? The claim of the prince would, in this case, be the same as if the money had been applied in any other way. It was a claim, however, which no prince would assert; it was a right which he was confident his royal highness would sooner suffer every sort of privation than come forward to prefer. He was confident his royal highness would rather forfeit all his revenue, than urge any claim which might have the appearance of a contest with his royal father. He possessed, he was sure, in their full force, not only the common feelings of filial duty, but was impressed with all the sentiments which more peculiarly applied to such a father. He would say, if it was to be viewed in such a light, that he had received from his royal parent protection, kindness, instruction, accompanied with every testimony of parental affection, and he would sooner die than urge so ungracious a claim, or ask for any part of what was appropriated by one to whom he felt so many powerful obligations.—It was contended, that consideration should be had of all the money laid out on the prince's account during his minority—of the expense which he occasioned in his cradle. In the case of a private guardian, this would certainly be proper; but the king was in a very different situation: a private gentleman gives his son an education more splendid, on account of the wealth he was to inherit. Would any one say, that the possession of the duchy of Cornwall could have any influence in determining how the heir to the throne of Great Britain was to be educated? It was a duty incumbent upon his majesty to give a suitable education to all his children; and the public had supplied him abundantly with the means. There was a very strong proof that this was the way in which the subject was viewed by the king himself. The duke of York, when yet a child, was elected to the see of Osnaburgh, and entitled, of consequence, to considerable revenues. Had his majesty appropriated these to his own use, in con-

Digitized by Google

sideration of the expense which he had incurred? They had been held sacred, and the accumulated proceeds of the bishopric had been laid out in purchasing large estates for his royal highness when he came of age. No reference had been made to his private patrimony, or that of any of his brothers. The expense of the prince of Wales's education might be set off against the sums he is entitled to. He was of opinion, that this deduction would be unfair; but to think otherwise was no reason why this motion ought not to be agreed to; that point could only be agitated with propriety after the prince's right had been acknowledged, and an account had been taken of the money received in trust for him. He denied that any argument could be drawn from the late period at which the claim was set up. In 1783, when the prince's establishment had been settled at 50,000*l.* a year. certainly no demand upon this score had been made; but it would be most unfair that any should suffer from the negligence and laches of others. Mr. Fox allowed, that the affair had been entirely overlooked by him, as well as by Mr. Wallace and Mr. Lee, the attorney and solicitor general, and the other members of that administration. But in this, he contended, there was nothing extraordinary, and no ground for any unfavourable inference. It often happened to the most diligent, able, and capable men, to overlook what was clear and undisputed. What he was now to say was a matter of testimony. He gave the House his honour, that a thought of this matter never once entered their heads. It was not stated to the House from any opinion of its merits, but because it really was not known to exist. Some then thought the allowance of 50,000*l.* greatly too small, and he certainly was of that number. He was prevented from proposing an addition, only because there was a difference of opinion upon this subject between him and his majesty. When so much was said of the depreciation of money and the high price of provisions upon certain occasions, it was strange that on others they were never thought of. How could ministers talk so much of the increased expense of living in one case, and, on a parallel case, allow those considerations no weight? He allowed, that all the sums of money advanced to the prince since he came of age, would form a clear and undoubted set-off; but that any difficulty should be made in balancing the account, he professed himself amazed. He loved the laws; he approved the established forms of judicial proceedings; he had the highest regard for the line of distinction between the judicial and legislative powers; but, most of all, he had a regard for the principle of substantial justice. He should prefer the last, if incompatible with the foregoing; but here, he contended, there was no variance between them. It had been said, and said truly, that whether there was a legal remedy, was a legal question; but not the slightest intimation had been given of the manner in which this legal question might meet with a legal decision. The matter would not, he trusted, be got rid of by such shifts, whatever might be the fate of the present motion. For a subject of this country to be placed in a situation of such hardship, was most unjust and most disgraceful. There surely was no reason for this illustrious personage being treated in this manner. In 1795, he was placed under many restrictions—just, yet severe. Not only with the letter, but with the spirit of these, he had punctually and chearfully complied. He had been obliged to reduce his establishment, and to live in the most private style. The right hon. gentleman had often talked much of the necessity of keeping up the splendor of the monarchy. He certainly thought this a very important object, though he was not sure that it might not sometimes give way to a greater. But did the right hon. gentleman think splendor quite unnecessary to the heir apparent? Would no bad consequences follow from the splendor of his establishment being so long suspended? According to the right hon. gentleman's principles, the most serious evils were to be apprehended. Under these circumstances, Mr. Fox said, if the prince of Wales had applied for relief without reference to any particular rights, he should have been inclined to have received the application, and to have considered it favourably. But when he says, "I have a just demand upon you," to refuse to hear him could be reconciled to no principles of generosity, of justice, and far less with the principles professed by the right hon. gentleman. He could not believe that the House would say, "I do not know whether I owe you the money or not; try your cause in a court of law: I rather suspect, that whether I owe you or not, you have no means to enforce payment: seek your remedy,

Digitized by Google

being your action; but, as a friend, I tell you, you have no remedy at all." This would be meanness and disingenuity of the deepest dye. The words of the motion might perhaps be rendered more unexceptionable; but no one could deny, that the prince of Wales had made out a colourable right, which ought to be inquired into. If it turned out to be well founded, he should receive what is due to him; if it should appear doubtful, it might be put in a way of judicial inquiry, and the king might be addressed to remove all difficulties in point of form. Last of all, if the House should be still more hostile to the claim, a resolution might be voted, saying that no farther proceedings should be had. The *argumentum ab inconvenienti* had often been allowed great weight, and never greater than of late. A member was allowed to retain his seat, who had been judicially declared ineligible; for a declaratory law was a judicial act. How much more was it necessary that there should be some relaxation in forms, in matter of such difficulty and importance as the present! He sat down in the confident hope, that the order of the day would be negatived.

The *Attorney General* said, if the prince of Wales were placed in circumstances in which he could not maintain the dignity of his rank, he should be willing to listen to an application for relief; but the question now before the House was a dry question of right. He expressed great astonishment that it had not occurred to the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox) and his colleagues in office. He knew the extensiveness of their information and the grasp of their understanding, and he was sure that if the claim had been sustainable they would have advanced it. But it had never struck them that the prince of Wales, after having been maintained for one-and-twenty years in all the splendor becoming his elevated rank, could at last call the king to an account for all the money received for that purpose during his minority. The learned gentleman was glad that the question had been brought to its true bearing, namely, whether the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall, granted for the support of the heir apparent during his minority, should not be applied to this purpose. Edward 3rd could never mean that he should feel no exoneration by the rich grant which he made, but that it should be a dry, accumulating fund. The provident intentions of Edward 3rd and his parliament, forsooth, were now to be frustrated, and the money was to be locked up in a banker's chest. He did not ask the opinion of a lawyer upon the charter, but that of any man of common sense. Instead of occasional supplies, the prince had received his royal appenage. From the 33rd of Henry 6th the contemporaneous exposition of the legislature clearly appeared to have been that which he supported. By that it was enacted, that the prince should sojourn and be at diets in the king's palace, and that the king should receive an account of all the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall [Mr. Erskine called out that that act was immediately repealed.] The learned gentleman maintained that this made no difference whatever. The Yorkists had gained great advantages at that time, and every one at all acquainted with history knew that every thing was in the utmost confusion. The repeal of the law was of no consequence whatever. After considering the point of livery, the learned gentleman proceeded to deprecate the idea of the House mixing with the determination of a matter of right. This would be a thing of the worst omen. It had no sanction in the past, and would be a most mischievous precedent for the future. Particularly it would lay open a wide field for canvas and cabal, which could not possibly enter into the courts of law. The wisdom of our ancestors had made a separation which we should do well not to confound. He by no means said that the prince had any compulsory means of enforcing his rights, supposing them to exist. The king could not be called to account. When a petition of right was presented to the chancellor, although he decreed for the petitioner, if justice was still refused him, he had no remedy. This was on account of the peculiar situation of the sovereign, in whom great confidence was placed, and whom it might be dangerous to subject to any legal process. If the House went beyond their constitutional competence, and entertained this question, they would do so to no purpose. It had been shown clearly, that the money advanced to the prince of Wales during his minority exceeded all his revenues, and that no balance was due to him. The House had declared general warrants to be illegal, but that was a mere abstract question; and bore no resemblance to a question of

Digitized by Google

civil right, touching the property of individuals. He thought it would be highly unbecoming in the House to obtrude its mediation between father and the son: it would be irreverent to the sovereign, and detrimental to the state. It was not pretended that these revenues had been in any degree misapplied. The elegant accomplishments and splendid endowments of the prince, showed that he had experienced the highest degree of parental care, liberality and attention.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that the master of the rolls had urged a very formidable objection to the motion, and had evidently made a deep impression upon the House. If he had not got over this difficulty, he confessed he could not so readily have given his support to the motion for a committee. But he thought he could furnish a complete answer to it. He denied, in the first place, the position, that the affair was between the prince of Wales and the king. The king had nothing to do with it, and his name ought not to have been introduced. The public was the other party with the prince, and, in taking cognizance of the matter between them, the House by no means acted as a judicial tribunal. A judicial tribunal was a tribunal that took upon itself to decide upon the contending interests of individuals; but the public, through the medium of their representatives, were now called upon to settle a dispute between an individual and themselves. Whatever was the nature of the report, it would conclude nothing. Against the prince the law would remain the same; and if in his favour, still it would not be final; as the appropriating act must go up to the Lords and receive their consent. The advantages of this mode of proceeding were very great. The learned gentleman was a judge of the soundest understanding, indefatigable in his exertions, and who studied not only the causes but the convenience of his suitors. Unbiassed as his enlightened and upright mind ever was, yet would he not feel, unavoidably, some degree of prejudice against a man who obstinately refused to hear the claims of his adversary, and rejected every proposal for an amicable accommodation? Would not he, most probably, have right on his side, who wished to avoid litigation; who would not exercise the extremities of the law; and who was anxious to make an appeal to his adversary's conscience? The method of investigation proposed was, in fact, a species of arbitration, calculated to prevent unseemly altercation. It had been said, that the motion could not possibly be entertained; but sums of money were often voted, where a matter of right must be discussed and determined. He would suppose that a contractor to the loan paid in too much, and this contribution was carried to the Exchequer: when he applied for relief, the House could not say—"Seek your redress at law." A committee would be appointed, and substantial justice would be done. Again, he would suppose that the steward of the royal princes who had borrowed money from the civil list, were to pay the instalments to the civil list, instead of the consolidated fund, according to the proposed arrangement: if they petitioned for redress, would you turn them round and tell them to seek their remedy at law? According to this mode, no injustice could be done; and as this was not a suit to be determined between litigating parties, no form would be violated. The public by its representatives was merely to consider, whether it had not received an undue advantage, and whether this was not an advantage which justice to an individual required it to forego?

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, the right must still be tried. He disapproved of deciding a point of this nature collaterally, and by a side wind. The fact could not be determined till the law had been determined; and for the House to erect itself into a court of justice, would be attended with the most dangerous effects. He maintained, that the question was not between the prince of Wales and the public, but the prince of Wales and his majesty, into whose hands these revenues had come; and, though he might in justice call upon the House to make good any sum he was obliged to give, still he was the accountable person, and upon him the claim must first be made. He had administered the revenues; and if they had been diverted from their right use, it was he who had diverted them. He was incompetent to pronounce whether the claims of the prince were ill or well founded; but he must be blind not to see the mischief that would be produced by determining upon them in this manner. He must ever set his face against attempts to confound the different branches of the constitution. The motion appeared to him unprece-

Digitized by Google

dented in its nature, and dangerous in its consequences.

Mr. *Nicholls* contended, that as the House had permitted the property of the prince in the duchy of Cornwall to be sold, and leases to be given, by which the prince, on his coming of age, was deprived of a very large sum which he might have raised by renewing them, the House was bound to make good those losses to his royal highness. He quoted precedents to show that the House had been always desirous to protect the right of the Prince to the duchy of Cornwall and its emoluments.

Mr. *Sheridan* was happy to find that the noble lord was disposed to place the question in a plain light. For his own part, he should have been better pleased, had the motion more distinctly stated the nature of the points that were to be decided, and their grounds. In his opinion, it was to be considered who the parties were; whether a just claim existed; and whether any other remedy than an application to parliament could be pursued by the prince, if it was found that his claim was good? The parties in the question appeared to be the prince and the government in general, and therefore the House of Commons acting for the public. If the revenues which of right belonged to the prince were, by error or inadvertence, applied, for the public service, would it be a fair thing to tell the prince that they would not listen to his claim? With regard to the historical knowledge of the attorney general, he must say a few words. That learned gentleman had commented on the act of Henry 6th as settling principles for guiding the application of the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall. But if, as that learned gentleman had contended, the king, as guardian of the prince of Wales, had a right to interfere with the application of these funds to the prince of Wales in his minority, why was this special act passed? The learned gentleman, however, upon an historical reference to the times in which these events passed, had laid very little stress on the repeal of the act. But he forgot that it was repealed on a petition stating it to be injurious to the prince of Wales. If the prince, however, had any claim upon the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall, how was the right to be made effectual? Were the prince even to obtain a verdict against the king, could it be made available? And if it could not, would the House then be disposed to listen more favourably to the prince's application? For it was to the House certainly that the prince must ultimately look for payment. The House therefore ought to examine the right, to ascertain how much the prince might, on the statement of accounts regarding the application of the revenues of Cornwall, be entitled to recover. Surely it was ungracious to advise the prince to enter into a law-suit to ascertain his right, when some gentlemen contend, that no arrear would be found due. But, if there was any other mode by which the prince could proceed, it should be stated. This was no hostile proceeding. The prince acted with the most honourable motives, with the utmost delicacy towards the king, in trying to ascertain his right: he felt that he had a duty to his father; but he felt likewise a duty towards his creditors.

The *Solicitor General* contended, that if the prince had any legal right, the proper mode of proceeding, in the first place, was, to ascertain that right in a regular manner. If a petition of right failed, the claim might then be submitted to parliament. It had been said, that the prince came forward as a creditor of the public; but that was the very point to be proved; for how could he be a creditor, if he had no right to the sums for which he sought re-payment? Whether he was a creditor or not depended on the question, whether the revenues of the duchy had or had not been properly applied? It was understood, when the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall were settled on the prince of Wales, that they were to be for his support; because, when sojourning and at diet with the king, they were to be by the king applied to his use; but, when not sojourning and at diet with the king, he was to live at his own charge. He contended, that the revenues of the duchy being settled by the crown for the maintenance of the prince of Wales, no account of them could be asked for; and he cited, in illustration, the practice of the court of Chancery, where, after a sum was liberally granted for the support and education of a minor of large property, no account was given of its minute application.

Mr. *Tyrwhitt* was sorry, that any thing should have been said that could lead to the supposition that this question involved any contest between the king and the prince of Wales. The consideration of the prince's right to the revenue of the

Digitized by Google

duchy, during his minority, came first to be considered in 1795; and in every consultation upon the mode of making it effectual, the prince had always made a proviso, that no measure to be pursued should imply any dispute between him and his royal father. When it was thought proper to proceed, by presenting a petition of right, the lord chancellor was applied to, who intimated, that he did not consider it as belonging to his official duty to present such a petition to the king. In 1796, however, the petition was prepared; and after it had lain over a time, the prince wrote the lord chancellor on the subject, who returned for answer, that he did not think it within the province of his official duties to present such a petition to the king. Since that time, no other mode of presenting it being found, nothing farther had been done in it. This statement he had made to show that the prince wished that this question should not be considered as between the king and himself.

Colonel *Grosvenor* had come to the House inclined to favour the claims of the prince; but the arguments he had heard had convinced him, that he could not venture upon the decision of the right.

Mr. *Johnstone* expressed great surprise, that gentlemen who had opposed the vote on the civil list, could consent to load the public with the sums now claimed. It appeared to him to justify what had been said of public men, that they were indifferent about what sums might be imposed on the nation, until the contest was about, through whose hands they should pass.

Mr. *Calcraft* thought the prince's claim entitled to the attention of the House.

Sir *F. Burdett* conceived that the cases of voting money to the civil list, and voting for examining into a claim of right by the prince of Wales were very different. It was the duty of every member to be jealous of the application of the civil list money, especially after repeated arrears had occurred, and when it was strongly suspected that the public money was unconstitutionally applied by ministers. No such jealousy was to be entertained of the prince. While this constitution existed, it was right that a suitable degree of splendor should be assigned to the prince. Surely there was no proportion in the extent, and none in the danger to be apprehended from the sums voted to the one, and the sums voted to the other. Besides, it was right to teach the prince, that the best way for him to succeed in any claims he might conceive he had, was to bring them forward constitutionally. For his part, he thought, that, owing to the influence which a right hon. gentleman opposite had acquired in the House, by his eloquence, or some other means, the prince of Wales, on every occasion where a question concerning him was brought forward, had been treated by the House in a degrading and shameful manner. [Here the hon. baronet was called to order. The Speaker observed, that to say the House treated any branch of the royal family in a degrading and shameful manner was unparliamentary.] He meant to say, that in his opinion the prince of Wales, in consequence of the influence of a right hon. gentleman opposite, had been treated in a manner unworthy of the House. He had seen, that by loans, and jobs, and pensions, the minister could always procure support to his own measures: he was jealous, therefore, of the influence of ministers. He thought the prince should be made independent: that he should be encouraged to bring forward his claims in a constitutional manner, that he might have no temptation to become the slave of administration. When he considered the nature of the profusion of ministers, when he saw pensions given to rich earls daughters, and made the subject of marriage settlements; when emigrant French clergy and noblesse were supported by money voted in parliament, he was surprised how any gentleman could stickle about taking the claims of the prince of Wales into consideration. He had no objection to a just degree of splendor in the crown; and he thought any one might look at the splendor of St. James's without being dazzled; but he did not think that the prince ought to be treated with contempt. The late administration had shown a marked disregard for the prince of Wales. He thought the prince almost one of the worst used men in the kingdom. Ministers had treated him with equal contempt as those whom they had confined in Cold Bath Fields. Indeed, they treated all those, of whatever rank or station, who did not support their measures, and would not be subservient to their views, with indignity or with rigour.

Mr. *Ellis* said, he deprecated whatever brought burthens on the people, as much as any man; and as to the present question, he conceived it to be of that kind with which the House had nothing to do.

Digitized by Google

Earl *Temple* said, he should have given a silent vote, were it not for what had fallen from the hon. baronet, which he thought made it necessary for every independent man to state his reasons for the vote he should give. His lordship then delivered his opinion, that the House was not a fit place for the discussion of the prince's right.

Mr. *Jones* said, that the claims of the prince were comprehended in one word, and that was, justice. He thought the honour of the House, and the dignity of the empire were at stake: "Fiat justitia ruat cœlum."

Mr. *Manners Sutton* observed, that nothing could be more unfounded, than the assertion, that he came there to involve his majesty and the prince in variance; that could not possibly be the case; for the question was not between the prince and his majesty, but between the prince and the public. His majesty had no right to receive the revenues in question; nor, in fact did he receive them: they were received by the public; and he asked them of the latter in parliament, the only constitutional representative of the public. His learned friend had said, that the only remedy was by an adverse suit at law. He was not aware how this was practicable; as, in the opinion of one of the first legal authorities in the country (Mr. Hargrave), no petition of right could lie with respect to personal property. He knew not by what rule of law the king could be called on to restore, even supposing his majesty to be the object of application; but he would repeat, that if the king did receive and should resist, the prince would not enforce his claim.

The question being put, "That the other orders of the day be now read," the House divided:

Tellers.

YEAS { Mr. Solicitor General ... / Mr. Sargent ..... } 160

NOES { Mr. Manners Sutton ... / Mr. Sheridan..... } 103

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

List of the Minority.

Adair, Robert
Andrews, Miles P.
Aubrey, sir John
Bampfylde, sir C.
Barclay, George
Barlow, Hugh
Bastard, J. B.
Beaumont, colonel
Bird, W. W.
Blackbourne, John
Bouverie, hon. E.
Bouverie, hon. E. D.
Bouverie, hon. W. H.
Brogden, James
Bunbury, sir Charles
Burch, J. R.
Burdett, sir F.
Calcraft, John
Cavendish, lord G.
Combe, H. C.
Courtenay, John
Crewe, John
Darell, sir Lionel
Denison, W. J.
Dent, John
Dickens, Francis
Dundas, Charles
Dundas, hon. C. L.
Dundas, hon. L.
Erskine, hon. T.
Fane, F.
Fitzpatrick, general
Folkes, sir Martin
Folkestone, viscount
Foster, right hon. J.
Fox, hon. Charles J.
Fullarton, colonel
Fuller, J.
Garforth, J. B.
Gascoyne, general
Hare, James
Howard, Henry
Hussey, W.
Huntingfield, lord
Jeffreys, N.
Jones, J. Tyrwhitt
Johnstone, sir W.
Kemp, Thomas
Knight, R. P.
Langton, Gore
Langston, John
Lygon, William,
Lowther, sir W.
Lemon, sir W.
Laurence, Dr.
Lubbock, John
Lloyd, J. M.
Lowther, colonel
May, Ed.
Morland, Wm.
Milbanke, sir Ralph
Morshead, sir John
Milner, sir W.
Manning, Wm.
Nicholls, John
North, Dudley,
Patten, colonel
Palmer, John
Plomer, W.
Ponsonby, George
Ponsonby, John
Ponsonby, hon. W. B.
Penn, Richard
Porter, George
Robson, R. B.
Richardson, Joseph
Ridley, sir M. W.
Shakspeare, A.
St. John, St. Andrew
Stanley, lord
Sturt, Charles
Shum, George
Spencer, lord Robert
Stewart, St. John
Sykes, sir Francis
Smyth, T. Asheton
Townshend, lord J.
Taylor, M. A.
Taylor, Wm.
Taylor, Charles
Tyrwhitt, Thomas
Tierney, George
Thelluson, P. J.
Tufton, hon. J.
Walpole, hon. H.
Walpole, G.
Wortley, hon. Stuart
Windham, hon. C.
Warren, sir J. Borlase
Western, C. C.
Wilton, R.
Yarmouth, earl of
Young, sir William

TELLERS.

Sutton, the hon. T. M.
Sheridan, R. B.

Mr. Canning's Motion for Papers respecting the Island of Trinidad.] April 2.—Mr. *Canning* said, that the present motion was preliminary to one, of which he had also given notice, relative to the cultivation of the Island of Trinidad. He did not disguise, that his attention was directed to the question relative to the slave trade, though he did not mean then to enter into the discussion of that question; but, often as it had been discussed, he had never heard any one attempt to maintain that if the trade did not now exist, it ought to be commenced. There had been only two points relative to this subject that had been decided upon by the House; the one in 1792, that the slave trade should be gradually abolished; and the

Digitized by Google

other in 1797, when an address was voted, praying that his majesty would take such measures as would lead to the ultimate abolition of this trade. It must be admitted, that to bring a great extent of new lands into cultivation, must be very far from contributing to the ultimate abolition of this trade; and, if the whole island of Trinidad was brought into cultivation, it evidently could not contribute to that abolition. It was important, therefore, that the House should be in possession of authentic information relative to this island. If he was not misinformed, the land to be put into a state of cultivation in Trinidad, was somewhat more than half the whole quantity of land which was cultivated in all our West India Islands. According to a statement published by a member of that House, now no more, the whole quantity of land in a state of cultivation, in the island of Jamaica, in 1795, amounted to 1,000,000 of acres, employing 250,000 slaves. If he was not much misinformed, Trinidad contained 800,000 acres, of which, at the time it was captured by Great Britain, only one-eighteenth was in a state of cultivation, employing about 10,000 negroes. If 250,000 negroes were employed in the cultivation of the lands in Jamaica, how great must be the number of negroes which must be imported to stock the lands of Trinidad. The objection most frequently made, by those who opposed the abolition of the slave trade, was, that it was injurious to the vested interests of the West India proprietors. No man was less willing than himself to trench upon those interests; but this objection would tend rather to strengthen the motion which he intended to bring forward, as the great advantage resulting from confining his motion to Trinidad was, that there was very little property vested in that island; and he particularly wished to know, as nearly as possible, how many individuals had a vested interest in that island. He had been informed, that since the capture of Trinidad, some resumption-grants of land had been made. The Spaniards had made several grants of this nature, as they had formerly done in Jamaica; that is to say, the lands were to be resumed, if not put in a state of cultivation within a certain time. He wished to know what the criterion was, by which it was ascertained that the lands were not put into a state of proper cultivation? Upon considering the subject, it struck him, that nothing was so likely to be the criterion, as the number of labourers or slaves employed in the cultivation of the land. If this was the case, and if the land was liable to be resumed if there was not a sufficient number of slaves employed in its cultivation, it became a question, what was the least number of negroes without which the land could not be put in a proper state of cultivation. Upon looking at Jamaica, he found, that 250,000 negroes were employed in the cultivation of 1,000,000 acres, or one negro to every four acres; he might take this, therefore, as the least number of negroes, without which the land could not be sufficiently cultivated. He wished, however, that the House should be in possession of every information relative to the subject; and concluded by moving, "That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to give directions, that there be laid before this House, copies or abstracts of any information transmitted by the governor or commander in chief of the island of Trinidad, since the capture of the same, relative to the state of the cultivation of the said island, and to the amount of its population, distinguishing the different classes of inhabitants; likewise of any plans or descriptions of any proposed allotment or distribution of lands for the improvement of the said island; and also, copies of any instructions which have been sent to the governor or commander in chief of the island of Trinidad, since the capture of the same, directing or authorizing him to make any grants, sales, or settlements of land within the said island; and of any accounts received from the said governor or commander in chief, of any grants, sales, or settlements, made in pursuance of such direction or authority; and also copies of any information received from the governor or commander in chief of the island of Trinidad, relative to any resumptions of lands within the said island, since the capture of the same; specifying the causes of such resumptions, and the authority under which they have been made."

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* was extremely desirous that the House, in acquiescing in this motion, should not entertain expectations of information which, he was inclined to think, could not be afforded. All that he could say was, that if the House should agree to the address, every thing that depended upon govern-

Digitized by Google

ment would be done, to give it full effect; but no inference was to be drawn from this acquiescence, that the motion would be the means of procuring all the information that was expected.

General *Gascoyne* said, that the right hon. mover had asked, whether, if the slave trade had not yet existed, any member of parliament would venture to recommend its institution? Now, there certainly was such a member of parliament, and he was that person. He would say, that if the slave trade had never existed, viewing, as he did, the beneficial consequences of it to this country, it ought to be commenced now. The advantages of this trade were immense; they were not confined to the town that he represented, but were diffused over the whole country.

The motion was then agreed to.

Debate on the Budget.] April 5. The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Ways and Means, the several acts passed relative to the Income Tax, and the accounts that had been presented, were ordered to be referred to the said committee.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that whatever might be the reflexions which presented themselves to his mind at the present moment, he should abstain from uttering any, except those which appeared to be absolutely necessary. It would be his first duty to remind the committee of the Supplies already voted, which were as follow:—

NAVY.

	£.	s.	d.
Exclusive of ordnance for sea service	7,770,896	0	0

ARMY.

Great Britain	6,188,204	0	0
Ireland	1,520,130	10	5
	7,708,334	10	5

ORDNANCE.

Great Britain	829,166	0	0
Ireland	125,000	0	0
	954,166	0	0

MISCELLANEOUS

Great Britain	260,482	0	0
Ireland	163,207	15	9½
	423,689	15	9½
Reduction of the national debt	200,000	0	0
Corn bounties	1,622,018	0	0
Deficiencies of malt duty, 1800	400,000	0	0
Interest on exchequer bills, discount on loan, &c. as per disposition paper	1,137,073	0	0
To pay off exchequer bills in possession of the Bank	3,000,000	0	0
Deficiency of 1,200,000*l.* voted for the service of 1801, out of the duties on goods imported and exported	410,000	0	0
Amount of civil list debt	990,053	0	0
Making	24,614,439	6	2½

Being, for Great Britain	22,806,092	0	0
Ireland	1,808,338	0	0
	24,614,430	0	0

By this it appeared, that the period for which these sums were voted for the navy, army, ordnance, and miscellaneous services was for five months only. There would remain seven months more to be voted in the committee of supply; but, under the present circumstances of the country, it was not his intention to propose now any resolutions for the remaining seven months for the navy or army; but, in the mean time, he could assure the committee, that every retrenchment that was practicable should take place. There would, therefore, remain to be voted for the navy, army, ordnance, &c. for seven months, and some for miscellaneous services. The Ways and Means, as they now stood, were as follow:

	£.	s.	d.
Duties on pensions, offices, &c. and malt duties	2,750,000	0	0
Surplus subscription on exchequer bills funded	180,874	0	0
Loan to be provided for by Great Britain	23,000,000		
Ireland	2,000,000		
	25,000,000	0	0
Amount of Ways and Means voted on or before the 5th of April	27,930,874	0	0

MEM.—Remains to be voted.

Surplus Consolidated Fund, to the 5th of January 1803			
Exchequer Bills on Supplies 1803			
Lottery			
Loan to be contracted in Ireland			
Stock created by Loan 1802			
Capital Stock.			
3 per Cent Consolidated Annuities	14,950,000	0	
3 per Cent Reduced Annuities	13,800,000	0	
3 per Cent deferred Stock to be added to Consols	1,601,375	0	
	£.30,351,375	0	

Digitized by Google

			Interest.	
Interest on the Consols, and Reduced....			862,500	0 0
Ditto on the deferred Stock from Jan. 5, 1808			48,041	5 0
Management on the whole..			13,658	2 0
Stock created by Exchequer Bills Fund..	11,138,062	10 0		
Interest, together with....	7,796	12 10		
Long Annuities			431,043	0 4
1*l.* per cent thereon			112,222	12 6
Management..			5,099	16 9
Stock charged on Income Duties.....	56,445,000	0 0		
Interest thereon			1,713,016	13 4
Management on ditto			25,621	10 0
	97,934,437	10 0	3,211,202	0 0

The above charge to be defrayed by the following Taxes:

Malt and Beer.....	2,000,000
Assessed Taxes.....	1,000,000
Duty on Exports and Imports..	1,000,000
	4,000,000

The terms of the loan were 65 3 per cent consols, 60 reduced. Deferred stock, 6*l.* 19*s.* 3*d.*; making together 131*l.* 19*s.* 3*d.* for every 100*l.* of money. The 3 per cent consols were taken at 75¼, being 1½ per cent more than the market price at the close of Saturday. The reduced, generally estimated at 1 per cent under the consols, were taken at 1¼ above the market price on Saturday also. This bargain he considered as perfectly satisfactory and auspicious to the greatest degree.—On the subject of the tax on income, he could assure the House, that the step which he was about to take was the result of his own thought; and that not only from what he had felt in his own breast for a considerable time, but that which he had communicated to others, who, if necessary, would vouch it for him; and he was sure the hon. gentleman opposite would do him the justice to say, that in January last he spoke with reserve upon that subject, and begged that no inference should be drawn as to the course which might be thought advisable by the executive government to pursue; all he said, or meant to say, at that time was, that the income tax was a measure much too important for the House to let go during the continuance of the war. He should be sorry if the measure he was about to take was the result of a change in his opinion, as to the policy of continuing this tax had the war continued; for, upon that subject, he knew he differed from many hon. members, for whose judgment he had great respect He was, however, bound to declare, that it was his thorough and entire conviction, that it was to the wisdom which originated that tax, and the firmness which induced the House to persist in it, that the country was indebted for the comforts we now had; for it was by that system that we were enabled to surmount the difficulties with which, during the last three years, we had to struggle; and it was from that conviction also he now recommended that this burthen should not be left to rest on the shoulders of the public in time of peace, because it should be reserved for the important occasions which, he trusted, would not soon recur. In that sense of the matter, he should always look to this mode of impost to be carried into effect, with little difference from that which now subsisted, except as to such modifications as might render it more efficient; he thought it worthy of the credit and the character of this country, to look forward to such a resource, in the painful event of being obliged to struggle for its honour and independence: not that he apprehended such a condition likely to be our lot soon; but he thought it his duty to state the sentiments he entertained on this subject —sentiments which he believed he should never change. He had now, however, the satisfaction of proposing an exoneration to the extent of this impost for the people of this country. He had stated, that it was his painful duty to suggest to the committee, the taxes by which he proposed that interest was to be provided for 97,934,437*l.*; and he should commence this head of what he had to submit, with observing, that it was impossible to satisfy the claim of interest on such a sum, without proposing taxes which must bear hard on the people. All he would ask of the committee was, to follow up the principle which had governed our conduct of late, namely, that of looking our debts and engagements fairly in the face.

Without further preface he should proceed to lay before the committee, the taxes, by which he proposed to provide the means of raising the supply. The first he had to propose was a tax on malt, hops, and beer. On malt, 1*s.* 0*d.* ½

Digitized by Google

per bushel; on hops, 2¼*d.* and 8-20ths per pound, to make it 3*d.* When lord North was chancellor of the exchequer an allowance was made to the common brewers in the nature of a drawback, of 1*s.* 4*d.* This he should propose to repeal. He should propose 2*s.* per barrel on strong beer, subject to a drawback, this year, of sixpence, in consequence of the difficulties with which the trade had to contend. The effect of this additional duty, on each barrel of beer, would be the next year 5*s.* 11*d.*, but during the present year, 5*s.* 5*d.* He was willing to hope, that this tax would be as little liable to objection as any. He was aware of the opinion which prevailed when the brewers raised the price of their strong beer to 4½*d.* per pot, in consequence of the high price of malt, and an erroneous opinion it was. He was aware also, that the brewers should not be placed in a situation wherein they could not stand the competition of private brewing, or in which the trade of a common brewer might be materially injured. The private individual was also to be the subject of this taxation: this was a subject which involved the interests of the public materially, as well as those of the common brewer. It was painful to increase the price of that necessary article of life, malt-liquor: the proportion, however, as it bore on the common brewer and the private individual; would be so managed, that the inducement to brew at home would not be diminished, nor, on the other hand, so increased as to injure the public brewer. The operation of the duty on beer he expected would enable the brewer to sell for 18*s.* that which at present he sold for 16*s.* Under this head he meant to do away in taxation the distinction which had subsisted between table and small beer; and in doing this, he proposed at once to correct a great deal of fraud, and put an end to a pernicious beverage which had lately been used. A great deal of small beer had been mixed with strong, for the purpose of bringing the whole of it under the lowest duty; by which practice certain noxious ingredients were introduced into the beer. He should propose to attach the duty on strong beer and table only, so denominated. This duty, together with the duty on malt and hops, he estimated at 2,000,000*l.* per annum.—The next tax he had to submit was an augmentation of the assessed taxes; and here he must remind the committee of the repeal of the income tax. It could not be expected, that those who were to be now excused from the pressure of the income bill were to feel nothing after the repeal of it; since those who contributed to the one must, generally speaking, contribute to the other. His purpose was to proceed upon a scale of progression, the average increase produce of which he estimated at about one-third of its present amount; the particulars of which would be specified hereafter. There was, however, one subject on which he would glance as he passed. A large number of journeymen tradesmen remained in the houses of their employers, and did the duty of servants; but under the title of journeymen, they were not taxable; by which means a considerable evasion took place of the duty on domestic servants. He should propose to charge for each of these persons 10*s.* a year; the produce of which he should presume would be 100,000*l.* Taking this sum and the rest of the addition to the assessed taxes, he would set down the whole under this head, at 1,000,000*l.* per annum.—He had next to propose a tax upon imports and exports, as a substitute for the convoy duty. He had held conferences with several well informed individuals, who had given him much useful information upon this subject, and whose co-operation he had reason to expect. He proposed to get rid of the present mode of taking the duty, to do away the system of ascertaining it *ad valorem*, in some cases, and to make certain regulations in others, as explained by a schedule which comprised 5,000 articles of duty, which would be exhibited all at one view. The duty on imports, with certain modifications, was to be increased, and that upon exports to be diminished. This could not be said to be a duty that would operate to the injury of trade; for it had been tried for three years, and during that period our trade had rapidly increased. He estimated the produce of this duty at 1,000,000*l.* The amount, therefore, of the Ways and Means, for defraying the interest of 97,934,437*l.* would be—malt and beer, 2,000,000*l.* assessed taxes, 1,000,000*l.* duty on imports and exports, 1,000,000*l.* —In all, 4,000,000*l.* By this there was an excess beyond what was wanted of near 800,000*l.*

Upon the subject of the produce of the consolidated fund, he requested, for

Digitized by Google

a few moments, the patient attention of the committee. He knew he was treading on tender and sacred ground. He was sure there was not an individual more deeply impressed than himself with a conviction that the sinking fund was the sheet anchor of this country; and if he were to make a proposition which could, in the slightest degree, shake that fund, or retard its progress in the redemption of the public debt, he should deserve to meet the reproach of every friend to his country. The operation of the plan he had to submit would be the subject of discussion on a future day; the object of it was not to retard but to accelerate the plan for the reduction of the public debt. The committee would recollect, that in 1786, the plan was first submitted to the consideration of the House, and then a bill passed by which one million was appropriated to the reduction of the national debt. All the compound interest of this sum was made to accumulate, and it was vested in the hands of commissioners, who should receive the annuity thus accumluating until the whole should amount to four millions annually; and when that period arrived, it was declared to be in the power of parliament to say, whether that should continue to increase, or be applied to the reduction of taxes. In 1792, it was provided that 1 per cent of every loan, or further sum borrowed, should be applied in the same manner as the million was in 1786; that was, to operate as a sinking fund for the extinction of such loan. Now, he intended to propose, that these two powerfully operative sinking funds should be consolidated, and work their purposes together, for the reduction of the whole debt, and, however paradoxical it might appear, yet it was true, that the whole debt could thus be extinguished in a shorter period than by keeping each to its operation, according to the former system; because, by the new plan, the whole fund would continue to accumulate, whereas by the old one, the operation of accumulation would cease when it amounted to 4,000,000*l.* By the latter system, the extinction of the whole debt would be accomplished in 45 years, a debt which must now be considered as upwards of 500,000,000*l.* His great object was, and he should expatiate upon it hereafter, to do justice to the present time, and also to make provision for the welfare of our posterity. It might be said, that the benefit to be derived to the public by the reduction of taxes, after the sinking fund had attained its maximum, would be prevented by this plan; but it should be considered, that, independent of this plan, there would be to be provided 900,000*l.* to support the fund of one per cent, for the reduction of the capital accrued since the last provision was made for such reduction.—There was one other subject on which, he was sorry to say, he was not able to give the satisfactory answer he could have wished. He alluded to the duty on salt. He never gave any assurance upon that subject; but he had stated in the course of the present session, that he had hopes he should be able to get rid of this duty. No man felt more than he did a desire to get rid of such a duty as this, when it could be done with safety. But, under the present circumstances, he did not think that he should be justified in proposing the repeal of this duty. He did look forward to the period when the country might be relieved in this respect; but he would not allow that the tax was so oppressive as some had stated it to be on the lower order of the community.

He would now recapitulate the substance of what he had stated. The whole supply was 24,614,430*l.* of which there was for Ireland 1,808,338*l.* The whole of the ways and means already voted was 27,930,874*l.* The sum actually wanted for interest, management, &c. was 3,211,202*l.*; and he had provided taxes for raising 4,000,000*l.* The general ground of the operation of the two sinking funds united, he should hereafter have to bring forward. He trusted, that by a firm and temperate system, we might promise to ourselves security and comfort. To secure to us our advantages, we should adopt, to use the words of his noble friend, a system of conciliation and firmness, by which we might preserve to ourselves the blessings of peace. The evils of war, he hoped, and indeed was confident, had ceased to operate on us; but this should not make us forget the maxims of our true policy. He then moved a resolution for raising the sum of 25 millions by way of loan.

Mr. *Whitbread* said, that if the plans which the right hon. gentleman had brought forward this evening respecting the trade with which he was very materially connected were to be carried into effect, they would be found to operate in the most oppressive manner. Perhaps, the pecu-

Digitized by Google

liar situation of danger in which he found himself placed, might unfit him at present to enter more cordially into those feelings of satisfaction and triumph in which the House were disposed to indulge from the conclusion of a loan on terms so extremely favourable, and the pleasure they experienced that the day was at last come when "the solid system of finance" which had so often formed a subject of exultation to a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt), but which the country had found to be so odious and so oppressive, was to be abolished. Undoubtedly, the repeal of the income tax was a circumstance which could not be contemplated without pleasure, and however the chancellor of the exchequer might pretend to have preserved the same sentiments on the expediency of the tax as at any former period, the repeal, at the present moment, was a severe sarcasm on the conduct of his predecessor. Proceeding now to the point in which he felt the strongest degree of interest, he went on to show that the principle of taxation now proposed was different from that adopted by any former administration. He reverted to the tax on beer imposed by lord Chatham in 1760, and showed, that at that period the public brewer received an allowance in the way of drawback, which in a great measure, indemnified him against the loss which he would otherwise have sustained: in the administration of lord North, when the tax was imposed in 1780, the same system had been pursued; and, during the administration of the right hon. gentleman's predecessor, this allowance was not withdrawn, when, in consequence of the Spanish armament, an additional tax on beer was imposed, the policy pursued by parliament hitherto on this point was uniform; and in every one of the acts of the legislature on the subject the allowance granted in the way of drawback was precisely declared to be for the purpose of protecting the public brewer against those who brewed only for purposes of private convenience. He could not but consider it a very odd sort of reasoning, to say that the brewers were now able to bear this tax, from the fall which had lately taken place in the price of grain. It was to be considered, that this was said at the time when the brewers were merely come to the prospect of relief; for hitherto this relief had been but very partially experienced. For a number of years, they had laboured under every sort of disadvantage: with all their exertions it was hardly possible to avoid a positive loss, and to gain any profit was absolutely impossible. Because grain had fallen for the last two market days, was this any thing like a fair argument, that the brewers were able to support so large an increase of taxation? He would assert that the brewers could not afford to sell beer to the public at less than 4*d.* a pot; and, when this additional charge was to be made on them, it could not henceforth be any object to them to continue their trade. On the supposition of any house brewing to the amount of 200,000 gallons a year, by the proposed tax, they would have to contribute to the exigencies of the state no less a sum than 10,000*l.* He would put it, then, to the justice of the House, whether the repeal of the income tax, was any just cause of exultation to those connected with a trade on which a direct levy to so great an amount was to be imposed. If once such a principle of taxation were admitted, future chancellors of the exchequer might without hesitation apply in a similar manner to a variety of other departments of trade. In 1760, when the tax on beer was imposed by lord Chatham, the price of malt was only 23*s.* a quarter, and beer was 3½*d.* per pot. In 1780, malt was at 30*s.* 9*d.*; whereas in 1802, its price was not less than 52*s.*, and had during a considerable period been as high as 98*s.* a quarter. He asked the House to compare the prices at these different periods, and then to say, whether such an additional charge was founded either in fairness or justice? He wished to know whether the stock in hand was to be subject to its operation? He touched on the exertions used by the brewers to favour a large importation of barley; and said, that while the speculation had been of considerable advantage to the public, it had turned out very injurious to those by whom it was in the first instance promoted. He believed the loss was not less than 40,000*l.* of which a large proportion had fallen on himself; a sum for which they had surely a reasonable claim to indemnification. He examined the calculations of the right hon. gentleman, and contended, that, on the principle he had laid down, the tax would produce two millions and a half, instead of two millions. If so, it was hard he should take so much from them. The brewers had suffered great hardships before they had raised the price of beer; and as soon as the

Digitized by Google

prices of barley and malt had lowered, they reduced the prices. If a halfpenny a pot more was to be laid on beer, the repeal of the income tax would be no cause of joy to the brewers. If the whole of the tax was laid on malt instead of beer, he thought it would be more beneficial to the revenue. We are told (said he) that the national debt amounts now to upwards of 500 millions, 250 of which were contracted during the administration of the right hon. gentleman's predecessor. I cannot but think, that at the conclusion of a nine years' war, it is but a poor satisfaction to the people to tell them, that such is the amount of their debt; and that, after all their exertions, every object of the war has completely failed. France has extended her dominion far beyond what even the fears of the most despondding had ventured to calculate. The Bourbons are driven even from the hopes of a throne. The prince of Orange has been deprived of the possessions long attached to his family. The states of Switzerland have lost the independence, which the blood of their fathers had purchased; and England, in return for all her exertions, and all her sacrifices, has gained the Dutch possessions in Ceylon, and the island of Trinidad! I am glad to hear from the right hon. gentleman, that the maxims he has laid down for his administration are different from those of his predecessor. I rejoice that it is his intention to avoid every thing which may have the appearance of insulting foreign powers; that he is determined not to interfere with the internal situation of our neighbours, but to conduct the foreign politics of this country on a principle which, though by some it may be despised, is the justest guide of national conduct—the principle of intrepid moderation. With such a system, and with a rigid plan of economy carried into every branch of the public expenditure, I do not despair of seeing the country recover its former greatness. The right hon. gentleman has exulted a good deal at the prospect of the continuance of peace for a considerable period. I sincerely hope his prophecy may be better founded than that of the right hon. gentleman who preceded him in office. In 1792, that right hon. gentleman at the opening of his budget, rejoicing that never at any former period was there such a prospect of peace for fifteen years as at that very moment. But how fatally did reality falsify the prediction! In nine out of these fifteen years the nation has been plunged into a disastrous war. I have only to hope, that the prediction uttered this evening may not be equally disappointed.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, it was not proposed to lay any tax on the stock of beer on hand; but he saw no ground why the stock of malt on hand should not be made an object of taxation. The hon. gentleman had stated a material loss sustained by the brewers in the importation of foreign barley; but it was impossible he could say any thing upon the subject at present. The hon. gentleman had stated, that at the close of the war, none of the objects of that war had been attained. He denied the position: they had attained the objects of the war, seeing that they had gained all that they had not lost.

Mr. *Pitt* said:—Sir, I wish to offer a few words, in consequence of what has fallen from the hon. gentleman who spoke last. The hon. gentleman has referred rather inaccurately, to certain expressions which he supposes me to have used in 1792. But the tendency of the language to which he alludes was an expression, not only of my confident reliance, but of my earnest hopes, of the continuance of peace. It is certainly true, Sir, that at that period there was not a man living, who felt more his personal happiness engaged in realizing that happy prospect which then opened itself to this country than I did—that prospect of the continued operation of our increasing wealth, our increasing commerce, our increasing resources, which had been the happy result of ten years of economy, of labour, of firmness, and of wisdom, on the part of parliament, in their endeavours to cultivate the arts of peace, to augment the revenue, and to ameliorate the condition of the people of this country, and which they hoped to follow up with no other task but that of steadily reinforcing the sinking fund for the diminution of the public debt, and of taking off those taxes which then pressed most heavily upon the laborious part of the community. Have I then, Sir, any very criminal charge to answer to, if, with some degree of fondness, I indulged the hope that those distractions would not affect us which then desolated France, founded upon principles which I then thought, and which every man must now admit, were directly contrary to those on which our happiness and prosperity were grounded? Can I, Sir, I say,

Digitized by Google

have any very serious charge to answer to, if, under such circumstances, I did indulge a hope that the blessings we then enjoyed would not be interrupted? This hope I was not singular in indulging; it was a hope entertained in common with men who have sometimes been the objects of the obloquy, sometimes of the reverence, of the hon. gentlemen opposite, men who went beyond me in horror and detestation (if any men could go beyond me) of those principles which were then disseminated in France, but who certainly went beyond me in their opinions of the measures by which those principles were to be resisted and defeated. I allude, Sir, to the late Mr. Burke, and those who thought with him: he thought that France would, in a political sense, become a blank in the map of Europe: that man whose prophetic mind had enabled him to obtain a glimpse of those unexampled horrors and crimes which have since desolated France, thought, that however dreadful those convulsions might be to herself, they would present to foreign countries nothing but weakness and imbecility. If, Sir, at that moment, I did entertain the opinion which has been attributed to me, it is an error of which, upon reflexion, I have no occasion to repent, since it did not betray me into any disregard of my duty. My hopes are, I confess, seldom among the least sanguine; but I trust that I never enter upon any great work, trusting alone to my own hopes. But from the beginning I did state, that it was a contest on which we ought not to enter without being fully convinced that we had no choice left — without feeling, as my right hon. friend has truly expressed it, that it was a contest in which we should gain all that we could preserve. That there were moments during the contest in which we did hope to obtain within the bounds of moderation, indemnification, and additional security, I am ready to confess, and these I contend were fit objects to be aimed at. But if we had obtained peace, with our constitution entire, we should have satisfied the motives which induced us to engage in the contest. Let me ask, after all that has passed, whether the hon. gentleman has any reason triumphantly to exclaim, that this day hast seen the subversion of my "solid system of finance," as he calls it? It does so happen, that, after many prophecies of the hon. gentleman and his friends of the ruin of the country; nay, after denunciations of actual ruin, when we were stated to be so irretrievably ruined as to justify the hon. gentleman and his friends in seceding from their parliamentary duty, at a time when many unfortunate events had added to the calamities of the war; at a time when there was a stoppage of the money payments at the Bank, and when there appeared symptoms in the British navy inconsistent with the principles and with the feelings which actuate the hearts of British seamen—at that time it was, that a proposition was made to provide a large part of the supplies within the year. Undoubtedly, the produce of that tax has proved to be inferior to what I was inclined to hope; but I have no reason to believe that that deficiency rests so much upon any mistake in the calculations I then made, as upon the difficulty of enforcing a principle which no man has yet by any solid argument disputed? Do we not remember the fears and despondency of the gentlemen on the other side, their wish to impress those fears upon the minds of those who listened to them, and to make the calamities which threatened the country even greater than they were? But let me ask, were not those difficulties considerable? when the stocks were, I believe, under 47—when the amount of the loans was so great, in consequence of the expense which we were obliged to support —when the hearts of many men sunk within them, though their principles remained sound; if at that moment no groan had escaped but for public distress, the public difficulties would not have been so great as they were. Since that time we have sustained four years of war, with the necessity of extending our operations, and with our enemies multiplied. In that very period, however, instead of realizing those desponding predictions of the hon. gentleman and his friends, we have gone on with increasing vigour, both in our finance and our commerce, notwithstanding the lamentable pressure upon the people—a pressure, however, much more augmented by the unfavourable nature of the seasons, than by political causes. We come now, Sir, to the peace, the discussions respecting which have been inevitably protracted to such a length as to render the expenses of this year equal to a year of war; and in this first year of peace, at the end of nine years of a war, unexampled in its nature and extent, we make a loan for 25 millions at the very same price of

Digitized by Google

stocks at which, in the first year of the war in 1793, with all the accumulating resources of ten years of peace, we made a loan for only four millions. I think, therefore, the hon. gentleman might have chosen some other day to call upon me to do penance, and to admit the destruction of that solid "system of finance."—With respect to the proposed tax upon beer, if it was in its nature bad, it ought to be given up; but ought certainly not to be made up by a tax upon malt, which could not relieve the brewers, except by extinguishing the private breweries, and thereby giving to the public brewers a monopoly of the trade. The hon. gentleman had omitted to state how many barrels of beer might be made from a bushel of malt. If his recollection was correct, a bushel would make three barrels and a quarter, or three and a half. At the period when the brewers raised their prices, he believed they were justified in so doing; but he thought that, previous to that period, their profits were such as ought to have prevented them from being in haste to complain, if sometimes those profits sunk below the common rate of mercantile gain; and certainly, when the price of corn fell, they must have been reimbursed in a considerable degree for their previous loss.—With respect to the modification of the sinking fund, there was no man who could look with more jealousy than he did upon any thing that appeared like a deviation from the system upon which that fund was established. If the plan of his right hon. friend was found to break in upon that system, it would be much better at once to provide 900,000*l.* in taxes. The proposal seemed to him to be attended with no inconvenience, but offered an additional aid to the sinking fund, which, after rendering all the direct benefits which the public had derived from it during sixteen years, now presented the means of deriving out of it a collateral aid, by which a great public burthen would be saved: it was at once the fruit and the test of the resources and the perseverance of the country.

Mr. *Grey* said:—The right hon. gentleman, taking advantage of one or two points of my hon. friend's speech, avails himself of them to pronounce a general panegyric on his own administration. With respect to the plan proposed this night, I will take notice of two remarkable features in it: first, that it is a total abandonment of that solid system of finance so much built upon by the late chancellor of the exchequer, and secondly, a manifest infringement of an act brought in by that minister, and laid down by him as a rule by which all future chancellors of the exchequer were to be invariably guided. On the point of the abandonment of the solid system of finance, I wish to ask, whether it be consistent with the public faith, that stock, which, according to the original terms of subscription, was to be redeemed in eight or nine years, is now only to be paid off at a time coeval with the extinction of the whole debt? What, I would wish to know, can have produced such an extraordinary change in the public engagements to a part of the public creditors, as the repeal of the income tax will produce? In my apprehension, it is to be ascribed solely to the consideration that the tax had been found so oppressive, so intolerable, so detestable, that not even its being pledged to the public creditor can prevent its repeal. I will now follow the right hon. gentleman into what he has adduced of the general success of the war. In what, Sir, does this success consist? We have gained, forsooth, all that we have not lost; but how does it appear that we have gained what we would otherwise have lost? Have we gained what has been a recompence for the sacrifices of the war? Let the people of England answer this question. The object of the war has been stated to be twofold, to check the progress of French power, and to counteract the influence of French principles. Has French power suffered any decrease? or has not the right hon. gentleman, by unnecessarily plunging the nation into a war, enabled France to reach a degree of power far beyond what was ever projected? Is the influence of French principles exploded, or will the right hon. gentleman say that the first consul's title is not founded on those very principles which he has so often condemned? Is he prepared to say, that Buonaparté is not now, as much as at any former period, "the child and champion of Jacobinism"? Or has he, by some sort of mysterious purification, purged France of it in principle and in conduct? Does his dominion present less formidable dangers now than at the period of his elevation? The right hon. gentleman accuses us of calumny; but have not all our assertions respecting the war, its origin, its progress, as well as its objects, been canvassed, and have not all furnished the subject of a direct charge?—On the subject of his

Digitized by Google

speech in 1792, the recollection of the right hon. gentleman seems a good deal to have failed. I happen to recollect the language which he then held. So far was he from apprehending any danger from the French revolution, that he declared he saw in that very revolution that the French government might become more powerful, but less dangerous. But admitting that in 1792 the right hon. gentleman was desirous of peace, no fair reasoner will argue, that the disposition to peace existed in 1793, because it existed in the preceding year. In the interval, false calculations of the resources of France had been formed, and false estimates had been adopted of the effect of coalitions to subvert the liberty and independence of a great and powerful people. —But the right hon. gentleman is not content with defending his own conduct: he accuses us of despairing of the resources of the country, of leaving the House under such an impression, and of returning only for the purpose of obstructing the measures of government. I am not accountable to the right hon. gentleman for any part of my conduct. I wish, however, to say, that neither I, nor any of those with whom I acted, ever despaired of the resources of the country. We reprobated the system pursued by the late ministers; we opposed, to the utmost of our power, their destructive measures; and we predicted consequences of the most disastrous kind, and even ruin, as the result of adherence to such measures. But, with a system of moderation to foreign powers instead of insult and indignity, of laudable economy instead of lavish profusion, of constitutional liberty instead of unjustifiable infringements of the liberty of the subject, we never despaired of the fortunes of our country. We left parliament, not because we despaired of the national resources, but because our views and the views of ministers, supported by a great majority of the House, were so different, that we saw no good could be derived from our attendance. Since that time, occasions have occurred, where we have thought it our duty to resume our places in this House. I, for one, must however declare, that I have never attended without reluctance; and that my attendance has been dictated by an imperious sense of duty. Any apology for my conduct at present would be impertinent. My reasons for taking the step are sufficiently well known, and I leave the decision on them to the public; or, if they cannot be fairly estimated by the public now, I leave them to the decision of an impartial posterity. If the right hon. gentleman looks back with pleasure to the whole conduct of his administration, I assure him, that I look back to the share I have had in opposition to his general system with no less satisfaction.

Mr. *Jones* said, that whatever collusion might have been charged on the late and present ministers, this night afforded proof that there was none; whatever coincidence there might be in their language, they were at variance in fact; one sung the *Te Deum* of victory in repealing the income tax, the other pronounced its funeral oration. The nation had so unequivocally expressed their indignation at the degrading and oppressive nature of the tax, that he was sure no minister would ever dare to reinflict it on the country. He gave the minister credit for honest intentions, and would vote for other taxes to the amount, which every Englishman would bear rather than submit to that diabolical impost.

Mr. *Mainwaring* thanked the chancellor of the exchequer for repealing the income tax—a tax so oppressive and odious as to excite the horror and indignation of every class of the people; but he could not forbear to express the deep regret with which he heard the right hon. gentleman declare, that this odious tax was to be held as a rod of iron, *in petto*, when the country might have the misfortune to be again involved in war. So strongly did the people of all classes detest this tax, and the mode of its exaction, that they would rather pay nine-tenths of their whole property in any other way, than be forced to pay this odious impost.

The several resolutions were agreed to.

Vote of Thanks to the Army and Navy.] April 6. The following resolutions were moved by the chancellor of the exchequer, seconded by lord Hawkesbury, and agreed to by the House *nem. con*,

1. "That the thanks of this House be given to the officers of the navy, army, and marines, for the meritorious and eminent services which they have rendered to their king and country during the course of the war. 2. That this House doth highly approve of, and acknowledge, the services of the petty and non-commissioned officers and men employed in his majesty's navy, army, and marines, during the course of

Digitized by Google

the war; and that the same be communicated to them by the commanders of the several ships and corps, who are respectively desired to thank those under their command for their exemplary and gallant behaviour. 3. That the thanks of this House be given to the officers of the several corps of militia, which have been embodied in Great Britain and Ireland during the course of the war, for the seasonable and meritorious services they have rendered to their king and country. 4. That this House doth highly approve of, and acknowledge, the services of the non-commissioned officers and men of the several corps of militia, which have been embodied in Great Britain and Ireland, during the course of the war; and that the same be communicated to them by the colonels or commanding officers of the several corps who are desired to thank them for their meritorious conduct. 5. That the thanks of this House be given to the officers of the several corps of yeomanry, and volunteer cavalry, and infantry, and of the sea fencibles, which have been formed in Great Britain and Ireland during the course of the war, for the seasonable and eminent services they have rendered to their king and country. 6. That this House doth highly approve of, and acknowledge, the services of the non-commissioned officers and men of the several corps of yeomanry, and volunteer cavalry, and infantry, and of the sea fencibles, which have been formed in Great Britain and Ireland, during the course of the war, and that the same be communicated to them by the colonels and other commanding officers of the several corps, who are desired to thank them for their meritorious conduct."

Similar resolutions were, on the same day, moved in the House of Lords by lord Hobart, and agreed to *nem. diss.*

Debate in the Commons on the Clergy Non Residence Bill.] April 7. The House having resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider of the act of the 21st Henry 8th, intituled "Spiritual Persons abridged from having Pluralities of Living, and from taking of Farms, &c."

Sir *William Scott* rose, and said,—Sir, in pursuance of my notice, I have to move for leave to bring in a bill for amending the statute of Henry 8th, respecting the clergy; and before I enter upon the subject itself, I must trouble you with a very few words in excuse of the person who has been rash enough to undertake it. Sir, it is by no obtrusion of myself that this office has descended into my hands; no man could be more sensible of its difficulties, or less disposed to a personal encounter with them. But I have yielded to the judgments and inclinations of other minds, aided by a sense of public duty in my own; the House, therefore, will have the satisfaction of knowing, that what I have to offer to its consideration is not the eager expression of any favourite, preconceived opinions; whatever other demerit may belong to it, it will come, I am sure, without the confidence, and I trust without the prejudice of system upon the subject.—The business is to review some of the provisions of the statute of king Henry 8th. The prosecutions recently brought in great numbers, and in different parts of the kingdom upon that statute, have imposed what I may venture to call an admitted necessity upon the legislature of reconsidering it. I say admitted, because the legislature, under a sense of that necessity, forcibly impressed upon it last year by two most worthy members, representatives of western counties, has already agreed to suspend its operation. I meddle not with the motive, nor with the characters connected with those prosecutions; if any thing exceptionable belongs to either of them, I fear that the reproach must be shared by the legislature which has addressed such motives and invited such characters. It is the less necessary for me to advert to them, because if no such prosecutions had existed, the statute would nevertheless be, in my opinion, a very fit subject of modern consideration. It is a statute upon important subjects immediately connected with the religion and morals of the country; but a statute made three hundred years ago, in a state of religion and manners very different from the present. It is a statute which enforces its operation by money-penalties; but those penalties prescribed under a very different valuation of money from that which obtains at present. On these considerations alone it might be deemed not unfit to revise this statute, even supposing it to be possessed of all the characters of original wisdom and justice that are to be looked for in an act of the legislature; framed with an attention to the exigencies of the times that gave it birth. It is admitted by lord Coke, 150 years ago, that "it then required altera-

Digitized by Google

tions and additions, although excellent for its time." Lord Hobart has likewise described it as a "most wise and politic statute." May I be permitted to say, with all the profound reverence which I owe and feel to the opinions of very eminent persons (men of oracular weight upon questions of the existing law of their country, but I may say, without offence, not quite of such unappealable authority upon questions of legislative policy), that I cannot help entertaining a doubt whether these panegyrics on the original wisdom and equity of this statute have not been somewhat liberally conferred.

It is impossible not to advert a little to the times in which it was produced, and the motives which, in part at least, operated in producing it. The times were times of great fervour and irritation; the corruptions of the church collected during the grossness of the darker ages, and which that church, by neglecting the favourite opportunity of reforming, has entailed upon itself the unhappy necessity of perpetuating and defending, had provoked great popular resentments; but, as was natural to be expected, resentments not always justly directed to their objects, nor very exactly proportioned in their measure. They overflowed upon the whole body of the clergy, deserving and undeserving (for unquestionably there were many of the first description), and upon all clerical claims, just, and unjust, for it is equally unquestionable that there are both. In short, the times were exactly those which are the least fitted in any country for a happy exercise of deliberative wisdom, lying in that precise juncture when ancient opinions and maxims have become the objects of contempt and aversion, and the new and improved system had not yet settled itself in a firm, and sober, and correct possession of men's minds. The history of those times abounds with instances of the general animosity that then prevailed against the clergy. It is a familiar anecdote in every body's mouth, of the observation made by the then bishop of London in a letter respecting an idle and malicious charge of murder brought against his chancellor, that a London jury was at that time so prejudiced against the clergy, that, where a clergyman was concerned, they were ready to find Abel guilty of the murder of Cain. A more singular demonstration of the general prevalence of that sort of inveteracy is recorded by one of the most exact inquirers into our national history (particularly the ecclesiastical parts of it), Mr. H. Wharton in his Remarks on Strype's Memorials of the Reformation, "crimes of incontinence," he says, "were then, as now, cognoscible only in the ecclesiastical courts; but rapes were then, as now, triable at the common law; and of this the laity took such malicious advantage in times immediately before the Reformation, that they were wont to pretend all acts, and even indications of incontinence in ecclesiastics to be so many rapes, and to indict them as such; insomuch that scarce any assizes passed at that time wherein several clergymen were not indicted for rapes, and a jury of laymen impanelled to try them, who would be sure not to incur the guilt of showing too much favour in their verdicts." There is reason enough to suppose that parliament was sufficiently tinctured with the popular prejudices of the times. It had its particular resentments against that great minister and churchman Cardinal Wolsey: a man of great talents! "qui nihil humile aut sensit aut dixit;" but who had likewise that pride and confidence of great talents, which, in a state of course manners, is with difficulty kept free from betraying itself in an oppressive insolence of language and demeanor. "They hated him because he hated parliaments," says lord Coke, in the passage I have alluded to, "and had been the mean that no parliament was holden in the realm but one, for the space of fourteen years;" and it could not well be forgotten, Sir, that in that one parliament, the very one which immediately preceded the parliament which made this statute, he had come into this room in all the pomp of the most ostentatious prelacy, and seating himself by your chair, had demanded 'to know the reasons of those members who opposed the king's highness's subsidy, in order that he might confer with them thereon. It is not out of our historical recollection, how severely an intrusion of the like kind cost the sovereign of this country in the following century. As to the king, he had other passions besides resentment to animate him in these measures; he had two years before began the business of his divorce: it proceeded much too tardily for the impatience of such a lover; he had quarrelled with Wolsey on account of the delay, and was determined to menace the pope into a compliance. "The king," says bishop Burnet, "set the bills forward, and they

Digitized by Google

were agreed to, and had the royal assent. The king intended by this to let the pope see what he could do if he went on to offend him, and how willingly his parliament would concur with him if he went on to extremities."

Under this ferment of passions was this statute conceived: and if it did come into the world with the characters of wisdom and propriety appearing in its constitution, it would add one more instance to the number, which the experience of mankind has certainly furnished, of good effects produced by questionable and mixed causes. I have ventured to doubt the existence of such characters. The very policy of throwing matters of this nature into the general tribunals of the country is, in my apprehension, subject to very reasonable doubt. I shall speak with the less reserve upon this policy, because, finding it here established, it is not my intention to attempt to remove it, guarded, as I propose it should be, by the correctives which I propose to apply to it. I cannot help remarking, that it was a violent innovation on the practice of the church, not only of the church then existing, but upon the general practice of the Christian church, which has considered matters of this nature as administrable in the course of ecclesiastical discipline only. Take, for instance, the matter of residence. The power of enforcing, or dispensing with residence, belonged *de jure communi* to the bishop. "Super residentiâ faciendâ potest ordinarius gratiam dispensative ad tempus facere, prout causa rationabilis id exposcit." Such was the rule of the Christian church. The oath of vicars taken at institution, which has existed in this kingdom for 600 years down to the present hour, is, that they will reside unless dispensed with by their ordinary. In the *Reformatio Legum*, a code drawn up for the use of the Reformed Church of England, by some of the most considerable persons of the age, both laymen and churchmen, the rule is, that absence is excused if the party is "annis gravis, morborum incursione extenuatus, vel ob quamcunque justam aliam causam episcopo approbandum." And in fact, the power of dispensing with residence continued to be formally exercised by Cranmer, and other eminent prelates of the Reformed Church, down to a very late period, notwithstanding the apparent prohibition of this statute, as appears from the records of the office of faculties, and from episcopal registers. I take such to be the practice of the Lutheran and Calvinistic Churches. In that most respectable branch of the Calvinistic Church, the Church of Scotland, I understand it to be a matter of consistorial discipline: nor does this practice found itself merely upon high and exclusive notions of the immunities of the church: it is no more than what the policy of the law has found it convenient to apply to the regulation of the conduct of men in other professions, the peculiar duties of which are enforced not in the ordinary course of judicial proceeding; but in forums of their own, and in a course of official administration, confided to the vigilance and integrity of their respective superiors: nor is it to be alleged (as one sometimes hears), that the interest which the laity has in the good conduct of the clergy makes this absolutely necessary, because, in the first place, no one will deny that they have a pretty considerable interest in the good conduct of other professions; in that, for instance, of their naval and military defenders; and, in the next place, because their interest, give it what comparative magnitude you please, seemed to be sufficiently secured by the power which the laity then possessed, and still possess, of applying to the consistorial tribunals, and there enforcing a specific performance of canonical duties, in all cases where it was fit it should be enforced.

I do not, however, object merely on the ground of this policy being a novelty, and a novelty without a necessity (though this alone is no contemptible objection in acts of legislation), but because it is a novelty that is unavoidably productive of practical injustice and inconvenience. When I use these words, let no man be perverse enough to impute to me that I am hazarding irreverent expressions against the great tribunals of my country; no man venerates more, either the wise constitution, or the honourable administration of them. They have both of them, at all times, and at no times more than the present, been amongst the best securities, and the proudest ornaments of our country. But I may be permitted to express a doubt, whether, in consequence of the very fact of their being so admirably adapted to the administration of general justice, they may not be less conveniently framed for wielding the peculiar discipline of a peculiar profession.—Take, in illustration again, this matter of residence.

Digitized by Google

The statute enacts, that "whoever is wilfully absent from his benefice (and which the courts of law have interpreted to be the parsonage house of that benefice), for one month, is liable to a penalty." The courts have of course followed the strict construction, which, as courts of law, they were bound to do, and they have accordingly determined (as far as can be inferred from the adjudged cases), that a wilful absence is that absence which is not produced by some physical necessity; for I cannot find, in any adjudged case, that any cause of absence has been allowed besides these three: 1st, Imprisonment of the body elsewhere. 2dly, Infirmity of body; and, 3dly, Want of habitation, or of an *ubi* in the parish; a plea which, I must observe, has been in effect disallowed, or at least contracted in some late determinations, in which it has not been admitted as a valid defence, unless it has been at the same time shown, that the clerk has approximated his habitation to the parish *cy près*, or as near as he could in some contiguous parish. These pleas likewise (all of which are merely physical), must be proved in an absolute degree. As to imprisonment of the body, that is not a matter which much admits of *plus* and *minus*, but the matter of infirmity of body must be proved to a degree, not merely of discomfort, but of something approaching to actual peril. With respect to habitation, I have only to mention the late case of the rector of Bow church; that clergyman was shown to be one of the most exemplary of his time; it appeared that he not only performed, in an assiduous and edifying manner, the public duties of his church, but in a manner equally assiduous and edifying, the more painful but not less important offices of private and constant ministration to the spiritual wants of his parishioners. It was admitted, on the part of the prosecution, that on these very accounts he was selected for the purpose of showing that no merit could excuse the legal guilt of non-residence; for true it was that he was legally a non-resident, living not in the parish of Bow church, but in the no distant parish of Saint Andrew's, Holborn; and under these circumstances, that the proper parsonage house was of such confined dimensions that the only ground floor room was converted into a shop. Any enlargement of the house was hopeless, not only from the obstructions of the statute of Mortmain, but from the excessive value of ground in that highly commercial part of this capital. Under this representation the jury was instructed, and properly instructed, by the learned and noble judge, to consider whether this habitation, incommodious and uncomfortable as it might be, was not yet one in which a clergyman, submitting to a painful necessity, might contrive to live, and the jury found for the full penalties against the defendant. I mention this case to show the degree in which even these legal pleas must be substantiated. As to pleas of necessity, merely moral, I cannot find the admission of any such in the cases which the practice of 300 years has furnished. I cannot deny that an attendance elsewhere, upon the last months of a declining wife, or parent, or child, or upon any other of the charities of life, is certainly a wilful absence; for it must be admitted, that it is produced by a mere determination of the will, though the will may be influenced in the particular case, by causes as powerful and as laudable as any that can act upon human volition. In the consistorial courts, acting under the episcopal discretion, or a discretion of the like nature, such pleas can have a reasonable attention paid to them. A court of law, acting upon the express letter of a statute, assumes no such discretion to itself; and it is expressly forbidden by the same statute, to invoke or admit the interposition of episcopal discretion. As far as a court of law contemplates such a subject under such an authority, it has been, and I presume must be, upon the footing of a something very little short of a hard and dry physical necessity.

So much as to the general policy. Are the specific provisions more clearly marked with wisdom? The provision made for carrying all its other provisions into effect, is by means of the common informer. Of that personage I shall take care to speak with all due caution, because I perceive, that although he is a very abhorred man, when he is blowing up a conspiracy against the state—not very gracious when he is enforcing a tax—yet that he is received with some degree of kind acceptation, when he betakes himself to the employment of privateering upon the church; all, therefore, that I shall venture to say of him is, that it appears to be but a clumsy sort of policy at best, to make the avarice of mankind the grand instrument of religious and moral reformation. But, supposing it ever so decent a thing to de-

Digitized by Google

throne the bishop, and to put the common informer in his place, look at the penalties with which he is armed! perfectly ruinous to the majority of the clergy at the time, and in that respect directly contrary to every principle of our happy constitution—ten pounds for a month's absence! By the *valor beneficiorum*, made five years after the passing this statute, a very large proportion of the cures in this kingdom were under ten pounds a year in value; so that the great body of the clergy were put into this state, that if they slept out of their parsonage house for one day above a month, they were deprived of all subsistence for above twelve months following.—What was the grand object to be secured to the public by this unnatural change of the ecclesiastical constitution, bearing so hard upon the convenience of individuals? Is it a canonical residence? By no means. What is a canonical residence? Not merely *residentia parochialis*, but *personalis ministratio* likewise—*residere in parochiâ, et deservire in ecclesiâ*. Such is the general language of the canon law; and mere bodily presence in a parish is no sufficient defence, in the ecclesiastical suit, for non-residence, if it is shown that the clerk has not likewise performed the duties which ought to accompany it. But this statute takes the bodily presence, independent of the personal ministration—the *corpus sine pectore*—upon the presumption, which, the experience of the world proves, will often fail, that the man who is compelled to be upon the spot, will perform every thing for which he is compelled to be upon the spot. If a man does but sleep in his parsonage bed, he may sleep there from month's end to month's end; he may live in the most slovenly disregard, or in the most insolent defiance, of every obligation of duty; and yet, as far as this statute reaches him, he may go utterly unwhipped of public justice. The residence which this statute secures to the public, may be a parish nuisance, and a parish scandal, and nothing better.

In pointing out such passages in this statute as appear to me to mark it rather as a statute of vengeance than reformation, as uniting in itself the extremes of violence and inefficiency, I cannot help adding, that if such provisions are really, what they have been sometimes called, the First-fruits of the Reformation, they are fruits collected in a state of great acerbity; harsh, and crude, and unmellowed; much fitter to ferment than to compose the passions of mankind. Let me ask those who shelter this statute under the apology, that time may perhaps have rendered some of its provisions unseasonable, for what times such provisions as these could possibly be fit? "That no clergyman, beneficed or not beneficed, should take a house, except in a city, market-town, or borough, under the penalty of ten pounds a month? That no poor vicar could take a lease of the parsonage, to help out his own scanty endowment, under a penalty of ten times the value of the profits of such lease? That no clergyman can hold a lease of land, though not occupied by himself, and though descended to him from his family, under a penalty of ten times its annual value? That no clergyman possessed of a patrimonial freehold estate, in a grazing country, could buy and sell a cow, without a forfeiture of treble the value of that cow?"—In my apprehension, nothing could have concealed the vices and infirmities of this statute, but its having been consigned, by almost general consent, to almost general inefficiency, ever since its birth, till within the last two years, when it has been made the commercial bank of two or three trading attorneys. Before that time it had rarely been heard of, but occasionally as a postscript to a dispute about tithes, or to some personal squabble between the parishioner and his parson, generally discountenanced in the particular instance by the excellent persons who have presided in the courts, who have repeatedly lamented their own inability to admit pleas highly proper to be attended to, and that they were bound to consider the most conscientious clergyman, who, after twenty years' most sedulous performance of all his duties, absented himself for one month from his parish (or even from his parsonage-house, though doing the duties of his cure), and with the permission of his superiors, as a culprit; and as a culprit who was not to be exonerated on any other plea than that which would exonerate a man from charges of the most atrocious kind—the plea of having acted under something little short of an irresistible necessity.

But whatever may be the original character of this statute (on which I have ventured to express an opinion, contrary to opinions which I cannot but respect when I look at those who have entertained them), it is not to be denied that the

Digitized by Google

change of time and manners has imported into it a degree of incongruity and injustice which no man can be found to defend.—In the first place, the money-penalties have acquired an additional injustice by acquiring an additional inequality. Many of the livings of this kingdom, that were meanly endowed with land or tithes, continue in their original poverty; others, better provided with those species of property, have risen into opulence. On the poor livings, the statute operates with its original severity, aggravated by the consideration that it touches the richer benefices, comparatively, with a feather. Its utmost effect upon a living of 1,200*l.* per annum (of which there are several in this kingdom), is compounded for by the payment of an income tax.—In the next place, the general alteration which has taken place in the general system of life and manners, must be adverted to. The native clergy (as far as the statute applied at all to them) were single men, living in the habits of a secluded life. They generally fixed near the places of their nativity. I observe, in most ancient catalogues of the English clergy, both secular and regular, that their names are usually taken from some neighbouring village or borough to that where you find them settled. From the spot where they settled, they had few possible calls; there was little communication between different parts of the country or with the capital; correspondence was rare, and carried on either by special messengers, or by the accident of pilgrims passing that way. The gentry themselves, excepting those who attended parliament, ventured little beyond the sod of their own village, unless to the county-court; the business of the county was transacted in the county. All this has undergone a great alteration; the different classes of men are no longer *glebæ adscriptitii*; communication is opened; much of the business of the kingdom is transacted in this town. The clergy are most generally beneficed in parts of the island remote from the places of their birth and education, and they have calls of family affection and duty to the relations they have quitted. Being invited by the Reformation to marry, they form new family connexions, which again produce calls of a similar nature; and, I presume, no reasonable man would wish that they should be deaf to such calls, and should turn their backs on the happy intercourses of family kindness. It is one of the best effects of the Reformation, that, by introducing them to the charities of domestic life, it has taught them the practical knowledge of the duties which belong to those charities. They have family property in other parts of the country; they are called to the capital for the transaction of family concerns; they are called to attend to the declining health of a wife or a child, by a temporary change of air and situation. I am no advocate for dissipation, when I observe they have families of young persons who are not without their claims to reasonable indulgences for the purposes of health, of education, of improvement, and, I venture to add, without fear, even of innocent curiosity and relaxation.

In the next place, the change, not only of the manners, but of that which is every day assuming a greater importance in the country, its agriculture, makes a change of the provisions of the statute, relative to farming, quite indispensable. It is impossible for me to state this effect half so well in any words of my own, as in those which compose a letter written to me by two most respectable clergymen of the west of England, and which, with the permission of the House, I beg leave to read, as a part of what I have to offer.—"Whilst we were thus indulging in what we conceived to be innocent pursuits, we find ourselves amenable to that part of the statute of Henry 8th, which interdicts us from buying and selling; and an avowed informer, who has come into the country with an express intention of prosecuting the clergy on the other parts of the act, has just began to enforce this tremendous clause. What constitutes the peculiar hardship of the modern clergy is, that the restraint in question did not materially, if at all, affect their predecessors at the time the act was made, but has, for the most part, been occasioned by the alteration that has taken place in the general state of society, and our habits of life. The facility with which all our wants are at present supplied, was in the sixteenth century wholly unknown. Our ancestors, who resided in the country, derived from their estates the most ample maintenance for themselves and dependants. The provisions which were laid up against winter in the great mansions, fill with astonishment the mind of a modern housekeeper. In conformity to this general practice, the resident country clergyman had, comparatively speaking, few demands for money, the glebe and

Digitized by Google

tithes supply all his necessaries; his wheat provided bread, and the barley, under his own eye, was converted into malt—most of the old rectorial houses having, even now, a building formerly appropriated to that purpose; the wool was spun under his own roof, and wrought into cloth in the neighbouring towns; the cattle, fattened during the summer (there was no winter feeding), were slaughtered and laid up for the remainder of the year; and, as his family must have been large, the day labourer and occasional artificer being fed from his table, it is reasonable to suppose that he had little to spare beyond his own consumption: add to this, that he was then a solitary being, deprived by superstition of those endearing connections, which impel mankind to look beyond themselves, to the welfare of those who are of far more importance to them. His situation is now totally changed—commerce and the influx of wealth have entirely overthrown his domestic arrangements: money is the medium through which all his wants are to be supplied; he therefore sells his wheat to pay his workmen: barley, the laws of his country restrain him from making into malt, he sends it to a market, and with the money received in return purchases beer—the wool is disposed of to a distant manufacturer, and with its value himself and family are clothed: the fat cattle are sold instead of being salted, and the profit ensures a weekly supply of fresh meat till the return of summer. The expenses also attendant on a marriage state (to say nothing of the various and heavy taxes), occasion repeated demands on him for money, which were wholly unknown to the clergy at the time of Henry 8th. A revolution equally great has taken place even in our system of agriculture. Formerly a part of every farm was appropriated to tillage, another to pasture, and a due proportion of calves and lambs were annually reared; but by experience it is found, that some districts are fitter for each separate purpose, so that a glebe may be wholly given up to corn, or pasture, according to its soil, to the great advantage of the proprietor and the public. In one instance, different sorts of grain will be sent to market: in the other, the return must be in fat cattle. By occupying his lands in this manner, the modern clergyman doth not violate the spirit of the act: though he buys to sell again, yet it is a buying and a selling incidental to the farming of his glebe; he is not carrying on a traffic, which is evidently the offence prohibited, but only in conformity with the improved mode of husbandry, cultivating his ground to the best advantage. Enforce the statute literally, and at once he is deprived of his principal support; it will be impossible for him to farm his glebe, which he must immediately let, to the incalculable loss of himself and the community; as instead of being (which whilst in the hands of the clergy it will generally be found to be) in a progressive state of improvement, it will gradually become worse, no tenant choosing to risk his money in manuring premises, the possession of which cannot be assured to him for a single day. The foregoing observations apply for the most part to our own case, but it would be selfish in the extreme were we not to remark, that there are many of our brethren of opulence and great respectability, who, actuated by the most politic motives, have, by occupying their own estates as well as their glebes, held up a superior mode of husbandry to their neighbourhood, and done essential service to the country. "To take them also out of the hands of informers, would be conceived to be an act well worthy your serious consideration. Any undue restraint on their exertions must prove a manifest injury to the community at large, and agriculture in its present state may be considered so far from an illiberal pursuit, that it is hard to say how any clergyman can employ his hours of relaxation (and such hours must occur in every profession), with more innocence to himself, and benefit to the public, than in the moderated study and practice of its various branches."

I have my doubts, from what passed within these walls last year, whether the House will quite go along with the sentiments expressed in the last paragraph. I confess that my own sentiments are considerably mollified, since the last year, in favour of farming; I see that in this country the parish priest is, by the very constitution of his office, in some degree, an agriculturist; he is, *ex officio*, in part a farmer. He is to take care, undoubtedly, that the ecclesiastic shall not merge in the farmer, but shall continue the presiding and predominating character; but the moderated and subordinate practice of farming supplies many means of cheap subsistence for the clergyman and his family; many means of easy kindness and

Digitized by Google

hospitality to his poorer parishioners; many opportunities of distinguishing the industrious and well-disposed by the favour of employment; and many motives of pleasing attachment to the place, which furnishes the healthy and amusing occupation of his vacant hours. Personal debasement must be guarded against; but when I recollect that it has been the opinion of all antiquity that *agriculturâ libero homine nihil dignius*, and that the practice of modern times reconciles it with the dignity, and even the majesty of the most exalted stations, I am not prepared to admit that personal debasement is a necessary consequence; and in the example of the illustrious Hooker tending his sheep on Barham Downs, I think I see, that even some of its humble occupations may be performed without degradation.

But what above all creates a necessity for new moulding this statute, is the extreme depauperated state of many of the churches and parochial clergy of this kingdom. The statute makes one uniform demand of universal residence, under one uniform penalty; and universal residence cannot be had without universal competency. If all the benefices in the kingdom were equal and competent, an equal obligation, enforced by an equal penalty, might be applied to them all universally. But the fact is, that the inequality is great, and has greatly increased since the passing of this act; since it is certain, that if many benefices have increased in value, many have been comparatively depauperated by the Reformation. The appropriation of the church revenues to the religious houses, was, in ancient times, a subject of loud and energetic complaint from parliament. This House represented, "That the religious men mischievously, under divers colours, appropriated benefices, and grievously threw down the houses of the same to the ground, and cruelly did take away and destroy divine service, hospitality, and other marks of charity; and the clergy from promotion did bar, in offence to God, confusion of their own souls, grievous desolation of their country, final destruction of the clergy, great impoverishment of the kingdom, and irrevocable ruin of the church of England." But the clergy, though pillaged of their glebe and tithes by the monks, had their resources. In market towns they had a variety of small devotional offices to perform for individuals, for which they were paid. In the country they farmed from the monks the glebe and tithes which they formerly possessed; but their grand resource was in the authority of the bishops, who had a power, and occasionally exercised it, to compel the monks to raise their stipends, as the times required. Temporary vicars, who answer to modern curates, had been raised successively up to ten marks, *considerata temporum qualitate*, which Spelman computes to be equal to 60*l.* a year, and the perpetual vicar was raised to twelve marks, equal to 70*l.* a year. They were single men, of small wants, and generally smaller learning: he who had Latin enough to read the office to those who could not read English, had no call for an expensive library. This statute, followed by the Reformation, struck a severe blow at their means of resistance. In the country it put an end to their farming the glebe and tithes, a grievance bitterly complained of by the convocation of the same year with this statute, which represented that the statute had *non-nihil iniquitatis* in it, by robbing the *miseros vicarios*, the miserable vicars, of this advantage. The Reformation swept away in towns all the traffic of private superstitious offices; but the great blow was struck by the statute of Alienations, or rather by the construction which has since grown upon it, and which has now exonerated the impropriated parsonages, from any power of the bishops to provide for the better maintenance of the officiating minister; for though the statute expressly reserved all rights, and transferred these church revenues to the crown, and consequently to its grantees, in the same state and condition "as they now be, as held by the religious houses';" yet it is settled law, in later times, that these impropriations, being lay fees, are no longer subject to the authority of the bishop.

It is now, Sir, too late to undo what was done at the Reformation in this matter. The property has for 300 years passed into circulation, is become family inheritance, possessed by as good a title and as safe a conscience, as other family inheritance; but when I observe that it is to be lamented that a better provision was not at that time made out of these revenues for the support of the national religion, I say no more than what is supported by high authority, particularly by that of a person who was a great favourite and ornament of this House, and no partial friend to ecclesiastical claims—Mr. Sel-

Digitized by Google

den; and by that of another person of still more elevated character, the ornament of his age and country! whose voice when not perverted by passions or interests of his own, was the voice of reason and philosophy itself! the great lord Bacon. The former expresses himself thus: "I doubt not but that every good man wishes that, at our dissolution, their land and tithes, and churches, had been bestowed rather for the advancement of the church to a better maintenance of a labouring, deserving ministry, relief of the poor, and other such good uses (as have in them a character of the good wishes of those who first dedicated them to God), than conferred, with such a prodigal dispensation, on those who stood ready to devour what was sanctified." The latter thus: "It were to be wished, that impropriations were returned to the church as the most natural and proper endowments. In mine own opinion and sense, I must confess, (I speak it with all reverence), all the parliaments since the the 27th and 31st of Henry 8th, which gave away the impropriations, seem to me to stand, in a sort, obnoxious to God, in conscience to do somewhat for the church, and to bring the patrimony thereof back to a due competency." May I presume, with all humility, to impress these memorable words upon the recollection of the House! Till that is done, which, lord Bacon says, "ought in the conscience of parliament to be done," all legislative provisions, I fear, can be mere temporary palliatives, and no better.

The truth is, that king Henry 8th put the matter of the church establishment into such a state, that without some forcible interposition of parliament, it is become remediless in all time coming. The poverty-struck condition of the clergy, at that period, is recorded in a hundred striking instances, by Strype, by Kennet, by Wharton, and other collectors. The venerable Latimer, in a sermon preached before king Edward, says, "We of the clergy had too much, but that is taken away, and now we have too little; for my own part I have sufficient, God is my judge, I crave nothing of any man, but I know them that have too little; there lieth a great matter by these appropriations, great reformation is to be had in them; I know where there is a great market town with divers hamlets and inhabitants, where do rise yearly of their labour to the value of 50*l.* and the vicar that serveth hath but twelve or fourteen marks, being so great a cure; so that of his pension he is not able to buy books, nor give his neighbour drink, all the great gain goeth another way—A redress God grant!" The same collectors record similar complaints made in a popular publication of that day, called "The Supplication of the Beggars." "Your pretence to put down the abbeys, was to put away what was amiss: it was amiss, that a great part of their land was spent on a few superstitious monks, who gave not 40*l.* alms, when they should have given 200*l.*: it was amiss, that monks should have benefices, and preach once a year to them that paid their tithes of the parsonage: it was amiss, that scarcely among twenty they set one sufficient vicar to preach. But see now how that was amiss, is amended—marry as the devil amended his dame's leg; when he should have set it right, he broke it in pieces. The monks gave little alms, and set unable men in their benefices; but now where 20*l.* was given to the poor, in more than a hundred places, not one meal's meat is given; that's a fair amendment. Where they had always one or other vicar to preach, now no vicar at all, but the farmer is vicar and parson altogether, and only a castaway monk or friar, which can hardly say matins, is hired for twenty or thirty shillings, and meat and drink, yea, in some places, for meat and drink only. I know, and twenty thousand more men know, more than five thousand benefices thus well and gospelly served." The fact of the reduced condition of the clergy is admitted by the legislature itself, not only by the acts of shortly afterwards passing the statutes of Union of Benefices, and of Dilapidation (which for the first time found their way into our municipal code, from a necessity then first emerging in any pressing degree), but it is expressly recorded in the preamble of these statutes, lamenting "the decay of parsonage houses, and the insufficiency of single benefices for the maintenance of a minister."

The condition of the superior clergy was comparatively little better. Cranmer, in a letter to his friend sir William Cecil, who had just taken to himself a handsome estate from the newly-erected see of Peterborough, and immediately thereon had reproached the bishops with covetousness (as was customary, if the bishops showed the least repugnance to the operation of being stripped of their property), replies, "As for your admonition,

†

Digitized by Google

I take it most thankfully; for the saying of St. Paul, that they who would grow rich fall into temptation—I fear it is not half so much as stark beggary: and if I knew any bishop that were covetous, I would surely admonish him; but I know none but all very beggars, except it be one, and yet I dare well say, he is not over rich!" The general condition of churchmen at that time affords a solution natural enough of that otherwise extraordinary fact, of their general and hasty relapse into the ancient superstition.

Succeeding times have provided nothing like a sufficient remedy. On a complaint made to king Charles 1st by parliament against non-residents, he answered them, "He recommended to this House to make due provision, that every parish should allow a competent maintenance for an able minister;" and it was upon that occasion well observed in the House, "that scandalous livings made scandalous ministers." From that time nothing was done till the splendid benefaction of the first fruits and tenths made by queen Anne; on which occasion her majesty observed, "that she had taken into her princely consideration the mean and insufficient maintenance belonging to the clergy in divers parts of this kingdom;" and the parliament in the preamble to the act, recites, "that a sufficient settled provision for the clergy, in many parts of this kingdom hath never yet been made." This fund has now been in operation for near a century, under the administration of a board composed of persons of high station, both in church and state. The number of livings returned, certified to this board and to the Exchequer, were not exceeding

Per annum.	Livings.
£. 10	1071
20	1467
30	1126
40	1049
50	844
Total livings under 50*l.* per ann.	5597

Since the first returns many hundred cures have been returned as of small value, some not more than twenty or forty shillings; so that there being about 11,700 and odd livings, in the kingdom, about one moiety of the whole were under fifty pounds a year, and upon an average less than twenty-three pounds a year. Private benefactions and accidental improvements have aided the operation of this charity; the two lowest classes have all received an actual augmentation from it; and a third class is now receiving the same benefit; but by a paper from the secretary of that board, which I hold in my hand, it appears, that "if we compute the number of livings under 50*l.* per annum to be as above about 6,000, a moiety of which were actually under 30*l.* per annum; and if we reckon that they have been since improved by the governors, and by other means, upon an average two-thirds, which is a very liberal allowance indeed, it follows that there are now 6,000 livings in England and Wales, that do not exceed upon an average 85*l.* per annum, and that a very great proportion of them are, at this time, not 80*l.* per annum, and so progressively from 80*l.* to 40*l.* and from 40*l.* and 50*l.*" In a document with which I am favoured by Mr. Archdeacon Plymley of Salop, I am informed, "that of 186 churches in that archdeaconry, (which, as he justly observes, comprehends a part of five different counties, and has within it specimens of almost every natural and artificial situation), 109 only have any parsonage house. Independent of this deficiency of fifty-nine parsonage houses, many of those in existence are totally unfit for the residence of any clergyman's family; forty-seven churches have no glebe land. Where there is a house, or land to build one upon, the want of a sufficient residence would be an excuse if the livings could afford money to repair or to build: but twenty-seven churches, exclusive of those that are subordinate churches, and which for the most part have no independent income, have from 2*l.* 5*s.* a year only to 50*l.* a year; no living would remain so low as 2*l.* 5*s.* a year, if the patrons would accept of augmentation from queen Anne's bounty; but this is declined for fear of putting them under the bishop's jurisdiction. Of the livings, twenty-seven are under 50*l.*; thirty-three above 50*l.* but under 100*l.*; twenty-three above 100*l.* but under 150*l.*; twenty-four above 150*l.* but under 200*l.* per annum: there are but nineteeen livings of the whole hundred and sixty-eight that are above 200*l.* per annum; and this in a country in which the ecclesiastical state is conceived to be much more respectable than in the average state of the kingdom.

In adverting to this subject, I just venture to remark, that in a publication of an hon. baronet, upon the revenues of the

Digitized by Google

kingdom (whom I do not see in his place), it is stated, "that the revenue of this charity of queen Anne's bounty, at first amounted to about 14,000*l.* per annum; and on the 1st of January 1735, the governors of that charity possessed besides from savings and private benefactions, the sum of 152,500*l.* of old South Sea annuities, and 4,857*l.* of cash in the hands of their treasurer; the state of that fund has of late years been carefully concealed, but it probably yields at present from 40 to 50,000*l.* per annum." The hon. baronet will, I am sure, thank me for using the present opportunity of correcting such a misapprehension. It is perfectly true, that such a sum existed in the funds in the year 1735; but it is equally true, that this was a sum fully appropriated to a great number of livings, to which it was paying a money interest till proper purchases of land could be found; and whereever there is a surplus of such interest, it is made principal, and is applied in a similar manner. Its present income is, with very slight accidental variations, the same as its original income, between 14,000*l.* and 15,000*l.* per annum. It would be difficult, indeed to conceive any reason for an idle unproductive accumulation of the money of this charity, to the prejudice of its present numerous objects; though, if any such practice could exist, I certainly should not be much surprised at the careful concealment of it.

To the mischiefs arising from the extreme poverty of many parochial benefices, I have heard it suggested in this House as a cure, that there should be an equalization. Equality is in these days the grand panacea for all disorders. Unfortunately, besides twenty other objections, arising from the general interests of the civil and religious policy of the country, there are two objections that seem to dispose of it completely: one is, that it could not be effected without a most enormous plunder of the laity; and the other, that if done, it would not answer the purpose for which it is intended. In the first place advowsons, though originally perhaps mere trusts, are now become lay-fees. They are bought and sold, and are lay property, just as much as any other tenements or hereditaments. And they are not merely lay property in law, but a very large proportion of them is so in fact; for of the 11,600 livings in this kingdom, 2,500 may be in ecclesiastical patronage, the rest (exclusive of those which belong to the crown, amounting to near eleven hundred), either belong to various lay corporations (for even colleges are such), or to lay individuals, who alone possess near 6,000 of the whole number. Now, sir, in this state of things, I desire to ask, upon what ground I can be called upon to give up half the living, the advowson of which I have purchased, upon a price relative to its value, in order that that moiety may be transferred to improve another living, belonging to another patron, who has paid nothing for that moiety, and who has no other title to it, but that he happens to possess the advowson of a smaller living? I see no ground, except such an one as would justify the legislature, in taking away half of any other estate I had purchased, in order to give it to my neighbour, because he happened to have less. Let gentlemen consider the effect of such speculations! In the next place, suppose that this was accomplished in a way consistent with the rights of property, what would follow? Equalize all the clergy, and you in effect degrade them all: for it is the grossest of all mistakes, that the parochial church of England is amply endowed. It is demonstrated by a very exact inquirer upon these subjects, Mr. Cove, that if even all the preferments, of every species, belonging to the church of England, were moulded into one common mass, and thence distributed, if the venerable fabric of the hierarchy was dissolved (a matter not to be effected without a convulsion and laceration of the civil state of the country, of which no man can foretell the consequences), and its funds parcelled out amongst the parochial clergy, the maximum of an English benefice would be not more than 167*l.* a-year, an income by no means adequate, in the present state of the world, to the demands which society makes upon that profession in point of education, of attainments, of manners, of general appearance in life. As the revenues at present are distributed, the clergy, as a profession, find an easy and independent access to every gradation of society, and maintain a fair equality, as they ought to do, with the other liberal professions; and the elevation of the highest ranks give something of a dignity to the lowest: alter the mode of distribution, and you run the risk of producing a body of clergy, resembling only the lower orders of society, in their conversation, in their manners, and their habits; and it is

Digitized by Google

well, if they are not infected by a popular fondness for some or other species of a gross, a factious, and a fanatical religion.

An invidious parallel is sometimes stated, between the sister churches of England and Scotland, upon this matter, and particularly upon the opinion of Dr. Adam Smith, to the disadvantage of the former. With all respect to the talents of a very acute and accomplished person, I am disposed to stop a little short of an unlimited subscription to his opinions, on many subjects, and particularly upon the subject of the English church, and the English universities; both of which I have had means of knowing, in consequence of causes from which I can claim no merit, in a mode of personal observation and experience, which that eminent person never possessed. Sir, when I consider the extraordinary men which the church of Scotland has produced, *(quales viros Caledonia emiserit)* if I may use the words of Tacitus respecting their ancestors,) I cannot help adverting to the circumstances, that their harvest of literature has been principally produced within the last thirty or forty years; within which time, I understand, a more liberal provision has, by the authority of the courts of justice, been made for their clergy. Sir, I presume that I state a fact that is generally admitted, that from the Revolution downwards till that time, the clergy of Scotland had not taken a distinguished share in the literary occupations of Europe, even in those of a theological nature. They have amply paid up their arrears, and their country has, in part at least, paid up its arrears to them, of a due and honourable maintenance. The improvements of their incomes have been very considerable in late times. I know not whether bishop Burnet, who certainly had the means of knowing, is correct in saying, that in Charles 2nd's time, all benefices in Scotland were raised to 50*l.* sterling; but I have been given to understand, that the church of Scotland, particularly taking into consideration the cheapness of education and cheapness of living, may be deemed a better endowed church than the parochial church of England. Which distribution of the church revenues is preferable, is a question (if it can possibly be made a question in the actual state of things), which must be examined not simply by a view of the distributions themselves, but with reference to many important circumstances connected with the civil policy of the two parts of the island. This I may venture to say, as a general position, in spite of the bright exception of the church of Scotland, that the general effect of an equality and mediocrity of provision, is to produce an equality and mediocrity of talent; and I think I do not misrepresent in saying, that it has had some such effect upon the foreign protestant churches, when I refer what they have produced, to any comparison with the splendor of the literary fame of the church of England. One thing I am sorry to learn from the statistical accounts of the worthy baronet, that the number of youths educated for the church in many parts of Scotland, is considerably falling off. It rather looks as if the profession, notwithstanding the kinder treatment it has lately received, has not yet obtained its fair share in the growing prosperity of that country.

Sir, I have to apologise for digressing to these topics; in returning, I must observe, that in the state of the church, I have described, universal residence is out of the question. How can the public demand, under pains and penalties, that there shall be a resident incumbent in each parish, when so large a proportion of the benefices in the kingdom do not pay more than what most of us in this House pay to our upper servants? There are, I suppose, three thousand livings not exceeding 50*l.* a year, and many below it. When I look at the real situation of the clergy, at the distresses and difficulties of a very large proportion of them, men must be made of sterner stuff than I happen to be composed of, who can say that this matter is to be put upon the footing of a rigid, universal, unbending obligation, to be applied with a mathematical apathy to all cases without the least consideration of men's families or their fortunes! Let us remember, that we are providing, not physical laws for the government of matter, but moral regulations for the conduct of a great number of men, placed in an infinite variety of situations, the effects of which must be taken into the account, and with a candid and humane consideration. Gentlemen say, and I am sure with the very best intentions, "give us clear, general rules; we desire to have nothing to do with any man's discretion." My answer is "Give me a subject that admits of clear general rules: this is not one of them." If the benefices of the kingdom were all equal, and the men who held

Digitized by Google

them were all single men, it would be easy to take the compasses out of one's pocket, and to mete out exactly the extent of indulgence, that might universally be granted to men, simply and uniformly situated; but you cannot apply a straight rule to a surface infinitely uneven and irregular. Here are above eleven thousand persons in conditions of great disparity, of different habits of life, of no small difference of education and attainments, of church incomes that bear no proportion to each other, and of family circumstances that are equally disproportionate. What is to be done? The rule, that would be no more than a just rule, applied to the opulent rector, would be a rule of severe oppression upon the poor man, with his benefice of 30*l.* a year, who is driven to eke out his family subsistence by a more beneficial employment of himself elsewhere. Will you construct your rule upon the scale of the value of benefices? To say nothing of the different value of money, in different parts of the island, the different state of men's families will still create a monstrous inequality; for no man will deny, that a single man, and a married man with ten children, living each upon the same income of 70*l.* a year are in a state of great inequality. All that can be done in such a subject is to call in a discretion, to operate on this infinite variety of circumstances. God forbid that I should mean an interested jobbing partiality! I mean a prudent and humane discretion, that is, to distribute itself honestly, and honourably, between the just rights of the public service on the one side, and the necessity of private convenience on the other as far as the infirmity of human judgment will allow. Another consideration calls with a loud voice for the existence and exercise of a discretion; I mean the consideration that must be had of that meritorious body of men, the curates. Establish a rigid rule of residence to be carried into a hasty effect, under the letter of a statute, and you turn these persons adrift, from situations where they have spent their lives innocently and usefully, to seek their bread where, on a supposition of universal residence, it is not to be found, perhaps, at an advanced time of life, and with families dependent upon them. These persons must be tenderly considered; if there is a curate who has long demeaned himself with propriety in a station, it would, in my opinion, be not more than a just exercise of discretion, to bear with the absence of the incumbent, till that curate is removed, in some way consistent with the attention due to his interests; otherwise the reformation of incumbents will be the persecution of curates. A discretion therefore must be called in, at least till the charity and piety of parliament has put the lower parts of the church establishment on a more favourable footing: and the only question can be, where shall that discretion be placed? And of that question, I say, that it must be determined by the result of this question, where can it be most constitutionally placed? that is with reference to the general frame of the church establishment, to the principles on which it is founded, and to the nature and character of the authorities that exist in it?

Upon all the different grounds I have stated, a necessity exists of revising the statute. What I have to offer I desire to propose as merely a provisional or interim bill; for I can never repeat too frequently, that till the situation of the lower clergy, is improved with respect to their incomes, their parsonage houses, and other circumstances, which I trust will soon become the subjects of parliamentary attention, nothing radical, nothing permanent can be projected. But, so far as the present bill is concerned, I beg leave to state the principles on which, I conceive, with all deference, the legislature ought proceed to the consideration of such a subject. In the first place, not to recede from ancient foundations, not to attempt reformations, particularly in the present disordered state of the church finances, upon high, *à priori*, notions of a theoretical perfection, but to use and apply the existing means in the constitution, in order to obtain such a quantity of good effect as is really attainable; to keep to that which, considering the familiarity of ancient usage, the attachment of habit, and the uniformity of general system, promises to be practically the most commodious; to give confidence, and to allow discretion where the constitution has vested discretion, has required confidence; and to guard, by reasonable caution, against the perils of a blind confidence and an abused discretion, Secondly, not to look to a petty harassing system of regulations, that is to be dogging and hunting men in every hour of their lives, and at every turn of their steps, for no sufficient purpose of respectable utility, but to a substantial *bonâ fide* enforcement of

Digitized by Google

substantial *bonâ fide* duties, that the public may not be told that there is nobody responsible, and, in truth, as the matter stands at present, there are but few comparatively who are responsible. I have no wish to deny that there are many offensive cases of non-residence; though the majority of cases, I am persuaded, are such as a man of even strict religious principles, tempered with a little human feeling (possibly not much the worse for that temperature), would find to contain circumstances of more extenuation than he had supposed. But even in the offensive cases, it is difficult to say who is responsible beyond the individuals themselves: certainly not the governors of the church, in hardly any case; for I must, in justice, let out to the House a secret, a little dangerous perhaps to be communicated at large, that in truth there is hardly one act of discipline which a bishop can execute upon his clergy (if it is at all resisted), but at the expense, and the vexation, and hazard of a law-suit.

Take this matter of residence.—A bishop admonishes his clerk to reside, and the clerk turns a deaf ear; what is to be done? The bishop has only this election, whether he shall employ the compulsion of the ecclesiastical process, or the common law compulsion of this statute; for a suit of one kind or other he must have. For a bishop to be dragging his clergy, in the character of common informer, into every assize town of his diocese, subject to all the public freedom of discussion (necessary, I admit, in that mode of inquiry), and to all the levity of remark (allowable, I likewise admit, in the advocate who has to carry his present point with his jury), is no very seemly sight; I cannot help thinking, that more harm is done to the modest dignity of religion by such exhibitions, than balances the advantage of the success of the particular prosecution. On the other hand, if the bishop repairs to the ecclesiastical court, I certainly cannot venture to describe a penal suit travelling through the consistory, the arches, and finally the delegates, as any luxury to the man who has to pursue it; certainly very far from it, looking at the expense and the vexation that may travel along with it. No man can expect a bishop to venture upon the use of such remedies, but in very enormous cases indeed. The constitution in theory supposes the governors of the church to have all necessary powers; but they are powers which can hardly be deemed to exist to any practicable effect. Give the governors of the church, not new and unknown powers, but prompt and commodious means of applying those they have, an awful responsibility will immediately arise; they will feel that the expectation of the public is upon them; that the public requires that the powers so given shall be used, and used for the purposes for which given. If they are not used, or not so used, it may give rise to a suspicion (which God avert) that the episcopal government of the church, high and sacred as its origin may be, is, in the present state of manners, less favourably adapted to the care of its interests and duties than the civil constitution of the country had hitherto supposed.

In the third place, that this enforcement of duties should be framed with as little vexation to its objects as it is consistent with its efficacy, without any unnecessary harshness or restraint, still less with disrespect and degradations; with all decent attention to the situation of the order in the state, and to the personal convenience of individuals. Their profession is in all countries of most important use to society; and its general utility depends upon its general estimation. In this country it is an eminent order of the state; it has always stood by the state with firmness, and in no times more meritoriously than in the present. The individuals are, in a large proportion of them, men of learned, and many of them of elegant education. Literature, both useful and ornamental, has been in no country so largely indebted to its clergy. Many of them are taken from among the best and most respected families of our country; and it is on all accounts, religious, moral, and political, anxiously to be wished that the families of our gentry should continue to supply a large proportion of our clergy. Such men are not the subjects of an extreme and overstrained legislation. Something must be trusted to their own sense of duty, something allowed to their personal convenience. They are to be governed, it is true, *lenibus imperiis*, by an authority efficacious in its results, but mild in its forms, and just in its indulgences. May I add, that whilst we have seen, in other countries, christianity suffering in the persons of the oppressed clergy, it imposes a peculiar obligation upon us to treat our own with kindness and respect, and to beware of degrading religion by an appa-

Digitized by Google

rent degradation of its ministers. If there has been an undue laxity in this matter, let the legislature signify firmly that they should generally repair to their benefices; but not as men stigmatised and relegated, carrying their resentments to their solitudes, and from whom, after unkind treatment, a cheerful and ardent performance of duty, can hardly be expected. Surely, Sir, it is upon such subjects more than any others, that one ounce of sweet spontaneous duty is worth whole pounds of compelled performance.

Whether these principles, on which I have endeavoured to construct this bill, are just, or the provisions well adapted to carry them into effect, is for the House to judge. I shall state briefly its general provisions, both on the part of the public and on the part of the clergy, referring, for farther and more minute detail, to the bill itself, which I shall move for leave to have printed, for the use of the members during the recess.—On the part of the public, I propose to guard against what the House appeared to consider as the abuses of clergymen's farming, and to enforce the duty of residence in a double manner more effectually, by enabling the bishops to exert the authority which the constitution has given them, and by giving the common prosecutor, where he is permitted to act, an increased reward for his diligence. On the part of the clergy there is offered, 1st, An entire amnesty for past neglect, where no prosecution had been commenced; and, 2dly, Where there had been an exemption from farther prosecution, on payment of costs already incurred. 3dly, On the matter of farming, a liberty given in the cases where they were injuriously prohibited by the ancient statute. 4thly, On the matter of residence, to give a fair and reasonable allowance of time to the clergyman for the occasions of private life, free from the doggings of any informer, though still subject to the superintendance of his proper superior—to allow an *ipso facto* exemption from all penalties, for clergymen bearing certain offices during the times required for the duties of those offices; to restore the power to bishops to grant licences for absence, in certain enumerated and expressed cases, which licences shall protect from the common prosecutor; and, in other cases, which cannot be specifically foreseen, or provided for, to allow the concurrence and consent of the metropolitan to have that effect.

Sir, these are the outlines of the proposed bill. I have only to add, that having felt the difficulties of the subject in undertaking this matter, I have not felt my sense of its difficulties diminished by having contended with them. The subject has deep foundations in legal and ecclesiastical antiquity; it has wide and diffusive bearings in the present system of life and manners, and certainly a very serious influence upon the good order of society, as well as the comfort of individuals. I could have wished that it had fallen into other hands, particularly those to which is confided the care of the great establishments of the empire; for unquestionably, in a country which, with a most fortunate wisdom, makes its religion an essential part of its civil polity, the establishments of religion are amongst the greatest. Far be from me the vanity of supposing that any bill which I can construct, on a subject so loaded with practical difficulties, can find a ready acceptance amongst the various opinions which prevail upon it. For I must honestly confess, that since it has been devolved upon me, I have rarely conversed with any gentleman who did not favour me with an opinion, that was not directly the reverse of the last opinion I had been favoured with upon the subject. All I have to say is, that if, with the improvements the bill shall receive from the wisdom of the House, it should finally succeed, I shall be glad to have been the instrument of introducing it to its notice. If it should fail, I shall write *satisfeci* upon my own mind and conscience, under the conviction that I have, with fair intentions, pursued a most desirable object, and only failed under difficulties, to which humble talents are very unequal. Sir, I move, that leave be given to bring in a Bill, "to amend and render more effectual the Act of Henry 8th."

Mr. Dickinson seconded the motion, and was sure, from the high authority of the mover, that the measure proposed would be found beneficial to the country. Mr. Simeon wished that an interval should be allowed between the first and second reading of the bill. Sir W. Scott said, that he wished to have the blanks filled up, and then to allow the bill to stand over the holidays. The motion was then agreed to.

Debate on Sir Francis Burdett's Motion for an Inquiry into the Conduct of the late Administration.] April 12. Sir *Francis*

Digitized by Google

Burdett rose, to bring forward his promised motion for an Inquiry into the Conduct of the late Administration, and spoke as follows:— Sir; the time is at length arrived, when laying aside conjecture and uncertainty, we are enabled to form a just estimate of the professions, principles, and conduct, of those men who have, for these nine years past, and still do (for it is the same junto), exercise the powers of government in this country. Now we may be permitted to make up our accounts of blood and treasure, and to show those who have a right to inspect them, what has been received in return for the dreadful expenditure of both. Now, we may be allowed to take a retrospect of the conduct of ministers and of the objects avowed; first, for engaging us in, and afterwards for continuing, the contest. I say, of the objects avowed; because, in the variance between the avowed and the real objects, consists principally their guilt. But, above all, I wish to call the attention of the House, and of the public at large, to the many material and mischievous alterations of the laws, and manifold acts of aggression, against the constitution of the country. In taking this retrospect which I propose, the origin of the war, so repeatedly discussed within these walls and agitated without, naturally presents itself first to our view; and though it has been decided by ministers, and their notoriously-corrupt adherents, that this war was just and unavoidable in its commencement, and necessary in its prosecution; yet I may now be allowed to appeal, from decisions obtained by corruption, falsehood, and delusion, to the sober judgment of this House and of the public at large, who have by this time, it is to be hoped, recovered a sufficient portion of common understanding to enable them to distinguish between truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, necessity and free choice. To prove that this war had not its origin in any such unavoidable necessity, but that it was sought for and provoked by his majesty's ministers, it will be sufficient to recall to the recollection of the House, the conduct of the ministers of this country towards France, previous to the commencement of actual hostility; we shall then find, that after the revolution of the 10th of August, 1792, our ambassador was recalled from Paris; that the French ambassador resident in this country was refused to be acknowledged—that an alien bill was passed, the first object of which was, the French ambassador himself—and that an embargo was laid on all ships in our ports freighted with grain for France, at that time certainly under severe pressure from scarcity, and threatened with the horrors of famine. Every one of which acts was contrary to the law of nations at peace, and in direct violation of a specific treaty between this country and France. These acts of hostility, together with our other warlike preparations (such as embodying the militia, calling together parliament in an unusual manner, augmenting our forces by sea and land, and, though last not least, the publication of lord Auckland's Memorial to the States General, a composition which, for folly, vulgar unmeaning abuse, and insolence, has scarcely a parallel), could not fail to excite something more than doubt in the government of France, as to the sincerity of the professions of neutrality made by the ministers of this country, and of their determination to abstain from interfering in the interior concerns of that; and these apprehensions, on the part of the government of France, could not but be greatly increased, by the recent recollection of similar professions made by the emperor of Germany, then in strict alliance with us, at the very time when he had planned an invasion of the French territory, and even up to the very moment of his entrance upon it, in pursuance of the treaty of Pilpitz; of which infamous transaction our court could not be ignorant, and, in all probability, was a party concerned.

What, then, was the conduct of the French government during this period? Notwithstanding the recall of lord Gower from Paris, they did not recall their own ambassador; they expressed, with the utmost moderation, their uneasiness at these acts of hostility on the part of England; they deprecated a rupture with England; they offered explanation of any part of their conduct which might give rise to it; I might almost say, they entreated ministers to submit to discussion and negotiation whatever might be the cause of difference between this country and that. What answer did ministers make to language so temperate? That of men predetermined upon hostility! They added insulting language to their former acts of aggression; they refused to give or take any explanation, or to enter upon the work of negotiation at all. Hitherto ne-

Digitized by Google

gotiation used to precede; cannon, the emblem of war, the *ultima ratio regum*, was wont to follow. Our ministers have reversed that march; the artillery of their vengeance, with which they undertake to punish guilty nations, leads the van. Negotiation brings up the rear, whilst war, dreadful war, that time of harvest to kings and ministers, of famine, pestilence, and misery to the people, fills up the space between. At length the French government declared—not war against England—but, after stating the conduct of the ministers of this country, and enumerating these acts of hostility, that the French republic was at war with the king of England. I have been the more particular with respect to the origin of the war, because, stopping short of a first principle, generally tends to confusion; and because, on the possibility or impossibility of avoiding so dreadful an evil as war, depends much of the guilt of those transactions to which it gives rise.

This, then, having been the mode of originating the war, let us next consider who were our allies? Austria and Prussia, those crowned plunderers, who came with their hands dyed in blood, and reeking from the massacres of Warsaw, after having dethroned the king of Poland and partitioned that territory, marched, in pursuance of the treaty of Pilnitz, to invade and partition the territory of France. These were the tyrants with whom ministers advised his majesty to form a triumvirate.

Such being the origin, and with such allies, let us next consider what were the avowed objects of the war. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed, or I should scarcely expect to be credited, to have effaced from the memory of those who hear me that the first wretched pretext for openly joining the coalition against France, was on behalf of our allies, the Dutch, to prevent the opening of the navigation of the Scheldt, a pretext indeed treated at the time by a man who is gone wild into his grave, with the contempt it unquestionably deserved. Mr. Burke did at the outset rend with a boisterous hand the veil of ministerial artifice and hypocrisy, and I can show no reason, unless that the people had no eyes, why they did not at that time discover the cheat. Once engaged in the war the grand difficulty was got over, and it was easy to find pretexts for its continuance, and the minions of arbitrary power and corruption in this country were so dazzled with the first successes of the leagued despots against the liberty of France, that this war for the Scheldt was soon by them swelled into a war for religion, social order and civil society; by which they mean despotism, unconditional submission on the part of every people to every government, and in the height of their delirium nothing would satisfy them, but marching to Paris, according to the duke of Brunswick's infamous and contemptible manifesto, the re-establishment of the Bourbon family and the Bastile, and the blood of those who had asserted, as we did in the case of the Stuarts, the right of the people to choose their own government. This was that French principle which it behoved all regular governments, *per fas et nefas*, to crush; hence all that zeal for the Bourbon family, which otherwise would have been as much neglected as our deserted ally, the family of Orange: hence all those pretended terrors for the dethronement of a king, which otherwise would no more have alarmed them than the dethronement of the king of Poland;—hence all those horrors for the murder, as they termed it, of a prince, which otherwise would no more have affected them than the assassination of their late allies the emperors Peter and Paul; hence all that malignity which characterised this political crusade, which rendered in their eyes, a whole people worthy of extermination, which dispensed, whilst they were victorious, with the rules of civilized war, and authorized in their opinion the attempt to starve five and twenty millions of people. In vain did that most able member of this House, warn ministers and the nation of the danger from the very nature of this contest,—in vain did he caution them against the danger of establishing by this war, a great military republic in the heart of Europe,—in vain did he confute their puerile but specious arguments, founded on the supposed consequence of issuing French assignats,—in vain did he expose the wild folly and madness of attempting to conquer France, and the impossibility, unless France was conquered, of her submitting to any interference of foreign powers in her interior concerns: terror, corruption, and the din of war silenced the voice of reason and experience, and France forced into a contest, from which she had no retreat, no choice but victory, or the re-imposition of the Bourbon family, armed with new t , ors

Digitized by Google

from vengeance, having no alternative but to conquer or be conquered, exerted under these circumstances, a furious energy, of which under any other she must have been incapable, overcame all difficulties, bore down all obstacles, and surrounded by the leagued despots like a wild beast, with the hunters spears, and treated as such, goaded to madness and driven to despair, committed acts of desperation which were afterwards made use of by those who had really caused them, to excite the hatred of every country in Europe against her. Victorious in her turn she threatened the threatener, oppressed the oppressor, and having in the struggle wrested Belgium from the Emperor, the recovery of Belgium became the next avowed and certainly a more national and important, if it had ever been the real object of the war. Again did the able statesman before alluded to exert his unrivalled abilities to prevent a continuation of the calamities of war on the score of Belgium; not, I believe I may venture to say, that he undervalued that possession, or thought it a slight acquisition to France, but because he was convinced that, like the Scheldt, was merely a pretext, whilst the same secret objects and motives which induced the ministers to commence, also actuated them in the prosecution of the war, and which rendered every hope groundless of its ending in any less unfortunate issue. What then, Sir, was the language of the right hon. gentleman who now sits behind the ostensible minister, and who has since defended, and as most people think, negociated this peace? That to leave France in possession of so extensive a line of sea coast as Belgium would afford her, was dangerous to the maritime strength of Great Britain; that it was impossible for this country to make peace with honor or safety leaving that conquest to France. Yet now the right hon. gentleman says, that a peace is concluded both safe and honourable, leaving that conquest to France, leaving her not only in possession of such an extensive line of coast as Belgium affords her, but in possession of almost all the ports of Europe from the Elbe to the Adriatic. The same right hon. gentleman with the same consistency, after having plunged us deeper into continental politics than at any former period, after having exhausted mines of wealth and shed oceans of blood in continental warfare, now tells you, that he has discovered the true policy of England is, to have nothing to do with the affairs of the continent. This, Sir, I know was the opinion held by some of our wisest statesmen of old,—their maxim was to guard the narrow seas, and not to become principals in continental wars, but it always treated, up to the present time, by the right hon. gentleman, as a short, sighted, narrow, illiberal policy, altogether unsuited to the present circumstances of Great Britain and of Europe.

Continuing the war then, upon the pretence of the recovery of Belgium, after a number of triumphs and victories on the part of France, Holland, for whose protection she, however, deprecating our interference, we undertook the war, fell under the dominion of France, and the deliverance of Holland from the Jacobin power of France became a favourite theme of ministerial declamation, and afforded in her turn a still more important avowed object for the continuance of the war. To doubt of the infallibility of the success of the expedition fitted out for the deliverance of Holland, was to expose oneself to that insolence with which, since corruption has attained its present alarming height, all men have been treated who have ventured to differ in opinion with the minister; and it was said, that the slightest knowledge of human nature was sufficient to convince every man in his senses of its infallible success. Now, Sir, not to enter into a detail of expeditions, which would be endless, and which will properly come hereafter, when the House shall have agreed to the inquiry which I mean to propose, suffice it to say, that expedition, after the loss of a number of brave men, who deserved more honourable graves—after having exposed a gallant army to disgrace, and placed it in a situation of difficulty no courage could surmount, terminated not in the deliverance of Holland, but in the deliverance of our own army by a most mortifying convention.—Having failed in this infallible attempt to rescue our allies, the Dutch, who fought most gallantly against us, unsuccessful in all their intermediate projects, baffled in every quarter, destructive to every country that listened to their counsels, or admitted their interference, still shifting the ground of war to any thing and every thing for the purpose of delusion, positive of success in the gross of projects which had all failed in the detail, yet calling for confidence

Digitized by Google

with a voice loud in proportion to defeat, and obtaining that confidence to an unexampled extent, having found themselves unable by continuing the war to protect Switzerland, to make good their guarantee to the king of Sardinia, to restore the king of Naples or the pope, to protect Holland, procure the cession of Belgium, or even obtain the paltry object of preventing the free navigation of the Scheldt, then rising in a just climax of madness and folly, they were to make a grand effort for the deliverance of all Europe. These were the avowed objects for which ministers formed combination upon combination, conjured up conspiracy upon conspiracy, and flung, with an unsparing hand, the wealth of Englishmen amongst the minions of every court, civilized or barbarous, Christian or Mahometan, throughout Europe. Sir, they have delivered Europe, as they did Holland, not out of, but into the hands of France, and are now unable to deliver themselves and us from the dangers with which we are threatened by that gigantic power, their folly and wickedness have created.

I agree perfectly with those persons who have opposed this peace, not in opposing the peace, but in all those doubts, anxieties and apprehensions which they have expressed as to the future prospects of this country, which do appear to me gloomy beyond all former example. The dangers are so many and so great, for we are reduced to a condition when even peace is insecure, that it requires no penetration to discover them, it is sufficient to have eyes and to open them. But the question is, who brought the country into this situation? to whose counsels are our present embarrassments owing? To the very men who now get up and tell you what themselves have done, predict the probable and fatal consequences, and advise you to pursue the same destructive career.

As to the fact that France, bounded by the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees and the Ocean, comprehending a population of between forty and fifty million of people, commanding almost all the coasts and ports of the continent of Europe, with all her colonies restored, and great colonial addition, with Holland, Switzerland, her dependent republics in Italy, her dependent ally Spain, terminating a career of unexampled glory with still more solid acquisitions, full of military enterprize, talent, and experience, and having, after the old Roman fashion, by war acquired great and new resources for future warfare, that this is a situation of extreme peril, difficulty and danger to England is too obvious to need being pointed out to any man. And what has England got to balance this monstrous power and aggrandizement of France? Ceylon and Trinidad—a little of the plunder of her own allies. Thus terminates a war for religion, social order, and civil society! This is our indemnity for the past, and security for the future! This is the return that we have to make to the people of England for all their sufferings—for all the expenditure of their blood and treasure! If the ministers have been out in their general calculations with respect to the great objects of the war, they have been no less out in all their calculations of the inferior objects, and failed no less conspicuously in the detail. So many expeditions, so various, so expensive, and so unsuccessful, are unparalleled in the history of this country. The expedition to Quiberon, Dunkirk, Toulon, Corsica, Ostend, Holland, Ferrol, Cadiz, Egypt, all have failed, with one single exception, and that too a melancholy work of supererogation, and the failures in many instances attended with signal disgrace, and not one has been inquired into.

It has been often said, and will perhaps again be said, as a sort of apology for all this failure and disaster, that this war was unlike all former wars—that the French revolution was unlike any thing that ever appeared in the world—that it was *sui generis*, and in short that the whole circumstances of the world were altogether different from what they had ever been before. Now, Sir, there appears to me to be no more difference between the scenes we have witnessed, and those which all history presents to our view, than there is between Shakspeare's dramas now and formerly, because they are represented upon a larger theatre. So far from there being any thing new in this war, it is the old struggle for rights and liberties against arbitrary power, which ever has been and ever will be as long as there are base and corrupt men, and men who love freedom and virtue. It was the struggle in which the first Christians were engaged. It was the struggle in which the people of this country have been so repeatedly engaged, when finally driven to it by a long pursued course of injustice, an arbitrary king, or

Digitized by Google

a corrupt minister. It was the struggle in which one of the Stuarts lost his head, another his crown, and which finally banished that family the land. As to the supposed novelty of this war, both ancient and modern history afford sufficient examples of wars of a similar nature to this. The Roman history affords a striking and parallel instance, and certainly of no very modern date; when Rome expelled her Tarquins, they with their followers like the Bourbons and the French emigrants, went about to all the neighbouring states to form a coalition against the new republic; they too made use of the same arguments to induce kings to join the confederacy against Rome, which have since been made use of to induce them to join the league against France. In the speech of Tarquin's ambassador to Porsenna king of Etruria, we shall find the pith and marrow of all Mr. Burke's more dilated eloquence upon the French revolution. He advised Porsenna to war against the Romans "ne orientem morem pellendi reges insultum sineret. Satis libertatem ipsam habere dulcedinis. Nisi quantâ vi civitates eam expetant, tanta regna reges defendant, æquari summa infimis: nihil excelsum, nihil quod supra cetera emineat, in civitatibus fore. Adesse finem regnis, rei inter deos hominesque pulcherrimæ." Here was levelling and republicanism—the destruction of the Corinthian pillar of polished society, the swinish multitude triumphant, and the common cause of kings. These were the motives that brought Porsenna to the gates of Rome—these were the motives that brought the allied despots of Europe to the frontiers of France; and Rome, like France, having no choice but victory or the re-imposition of the Tarquins, like her, was forced to energy and exertions of which she was thought incapable—that war too, like this, by forcing those exertions, laid the foundation of the future grandeur of the people attempted to be oppressed.

That France does bid fair to become mistress of the world is a most melancholy truth. She bids fair to realize the opinion of a very noble political author, who in comparing what he calls the health of ancient jurisprudence, by which he means republican institutions, with the modern or Gothic policy, upon which the modern kingdoms of Europe are founded, and which he thinks are mouldering away at their foundations, and becoming every day more and more unfit for the altered circumstances of the world, on which account, he says, the people of all countries are growing uneasy under them, he adds these remarkable words; "The nations of Europe are tumbling and tossing on the bed of sickness, and that nation which shall first recover the health of ancient jurisprudence, and if you will have my opinion, it will be France will give law to, subdue and govern the rest."—Whether France shall ever recover the perfect health of ancient jurisprudence, and remain one and indivisible, or whether she shall be torn again by factions, split and divide, depends at all events, upon circumstances out of our power to control; much, probably upon that extraordinary man now at the head of her affairs; if he should prove as great a statesman and legislator, as he has proved himself a great general and dextrous politician; that is, if he should have the ability and virtue to establish in France a well-regulated free state, she probably will remain the mistress of of the world; on the other hand, if he should prove a mere man of talents, an ambitious self-seeker, she possibly may not, but again split and divide, and be no longer formidable to Europe.—In the whole of this contest two things strike me as remarkable, and as characterizing ominously the contending parties; the constancy with which France has adhered to her favourite principles, viz. to make separate peace with each of the powers coalesced against her, and not to allow any of them, especially this country, to pollute, as they term it, that is to retain possession of an inch of the territory of the republic; and on our part, the abandonment one after another, of every avowed object of the war.

But now ministers tell us they have made a safe and honourable peace. How a peace can be safe which is not honourable, I am at a loss to conceive; or how a peace can be honourable by which every object of the war is abandoned, which leaves your enemy in a state of unexampled aggrandizement, and ends in the plunder of your own ruined allies is also beyond my comprehension. But say, for the sake of argument, this is a safe and honourable peace, what stronger accusation can be brought against the authors and supporters of the war? I take a peace of that description to be the only legitimate object of war, and he who can remain in peace with safety and honour, yet goes to war, or prolongs war when a

Digitized by Google

safe and honourable peace might be obtained, deserves to be considered as an enemy to mankind. But does any man believe there was a single moment of the present contest, from its commencement to its termination, in which such a peace as this might not have been obtained. If this is a safe and honourable peace, why go to war at all?—why was the treaty of Paris broken off?—why was Belgium made a *sine qua non*?—why was the treaty of Lisle broken off?—why stand about delivering in ultimatums in the first instance?—about a peace in which all is given up on the one side, and all retained on the other, there never can be a dispute. But, above all, why was the overture made by Buonaparté two years ago, treated with such insolence and contempt? Is there a man now who does not regret the folly which dictated that letter signed by lord Grenville, in answer to the overture made by Buonaparté? Is there a man, besides the late minister himself, who at once defends this peace, and that refusal even to treat? Does any man believe that at that time such a peace as this might not have been obtained? If it had, how much public and private misfortune would have been saved? The monstrous expense of the Egyptian expedition would have been prevented; the brave army of Egypt would not have its ranks thinned by a barren and fruitless conquest, the great and good Abercrombie, who uniting the virtues of the citizen with the courage and abilities of the soldier, was indeed the very reverse of that army he refused to command in Ireland, and only formidable to the enemies of his country, we should not have now to lament. Under what circumstances of advantage would this country at that time have treated? When, after a long career of disaster, the tide of fortune for a moment turned in our favour, and afforded ministers an opportunity of extricating the country in a great measure from the difficulties in which they had involved it; when the reverses of the French arms in Italy, the brilliant victory of Aboukir which dazzled the eyes of all Europe with the splendor of our naval glory, the abandonment of the Egyptian expedition on the part of Buonaparté, above all, his newly acquired power, and the unsettled state of the interior of France, all combined to place this country on a vantage ground, which a very little indeed before, the most sanguine mind could not have indulged a hope of obtaining: here was a golden moment which wisdom would have seized with avidity, and which folly, wickedness, and presumption threw away. But little things make little men proud, and our ministers, inflated with a little temporary success, began to indulge in their former dreams of marching to Paris, punishing the regicides, and reinstating the Bourbons on the throne. But how are the mighty fallen! The right hon. gentleman after all his gigantic and unjustifiable projects against France, he who, while foolishly confident of success, was for "bellum usque ad internecionem" with the French republic, is now content to receive from "the child and champion of Jacobinism" and puppet of its folly, as indemnity for the past and security for the future, Ceylon and Trinidad! I think I may fairly call upon those persons who have supported the late minister, and whom he deluded with far other promises and vaunts than these; they have most reason to complain, and should be the first to join with me in voting for an inquiry into his conduct.

There is another feature, and a very prominent one too, in the conduct of the late administration, too important to be passed over in silence.—I mean their conduct towards neutral powers, and which raised such a storm in the north as nothing but the most unlooked-for accident could have dispelled. Unlooked for I mean by the generality of mankind, for I know not what to call unlooked for by our late ministers, or uncalculated upon, since I have heard them in this House calculate upon the private assassination of Buonaparté. Sir, I do not mean to weary you with a long discussion of what is called the law of nations, which every body knows is a mere chimera, and at all times the law of the strongest; I mean only to impeach the wisdom and propriety of the conduct of ministers in stirring that question, which the discussion of former ministers had carefully avoided, especially at that time. And what was that time? A time when you had famine in England, martial law in Ireland, and we were left singly in the war with France, who had not only by her valour defeated the combination of all Europe against her, but also by her wisdom converted some of the most formidable of her enemies to combine with her against you. Against this formidable combination, with exhausted finances, famine, and martial law in the land, did

Digitized by Google

ministers risk the very existence of this country upon the neutral question. From these difficulties and dangers the assassination of the emperor Paul relieved us for the time; but it is impossible not to see that the conduct of ministers on this occasion has sown the seeds of future discord throughout Europe, and that the lamentable victory, as we call it, of Copenhagen, which appears to me to have been an evident failure, is likely to produce consequences very different indeed from those which ministers expected, viz. the forcing neutral nations to acknowledge our right of search; on the contrary, no one who pays the least attention to what is passing in Europe can avoid seeing that this question is more unsettled than ever; that France, in all her treaties with foreign states, in all her commercial transactions, wherever it can be brought into notice, ostentatiously sets herself forward as the defender and protector of the rights of neutrals. And if ever you shall again venture to go to war with France, which I very much doubt, the ministers have so cast down the country, every maritime state in Europe will range on her side against you upon this single principle only, and that France, notwithstanding her revolution and her doctrine of rights, unpalatable as they are to the old governments of Europe, is nevertheless upon the whole considered as more tolerable than the domineering insolence of Great Britain. Unfortunately, we have had too much power, considering the little wisdom we had to wield it. I suppose it will be said, as it has been said before, that the navy and commerce of England depended upon bringing this question to an issue. First I answer that it is not brought to an issue, but is more unsettled than before; but moreover that we have had so many false and idle assertions and opinions from ministers, that it is high time to proceed to investigation. What one opinion of their's in the whole course of this calamitous war has not been advanced with arrogance, and uniformly belied by experience? They asserted this war would be a short and successful war; one campaign in their opinion would be sufficient to counteract the French revolution, to punish the regicides, and reinstate the Bourbons. In their opinion the march to Paris was no such difficult undertaking. They demonstrated to us very early in the war that France must be ruined by the issue of assignats. She was in the gulph of bankruptcy, and totally incapable of much longer continuing the contest. In their opinion, the first coalition they had formed against France was invincible and indissoluble, cemented with English gold, and the common cause of kings, yet when this invincible and indissoluble body was vanquished and dissolved, our ministers, untaught even by the severe discipline of experience, told the same story with the same confidence of their second coalition with the magnanimous emperor Paul—he was the right hon. gentleman's *magnus Apollo*, the model which he held out to princes, the perpetual theme of his panegyric, he, we were told, came into the field as God's own soldier, whose armour, conscience buckled on; his was a noble gratuitous effort in the cause of religion and social order; and yet for a barren rock in the Mediterranean, why he, even he fell off as vilely as the rest. Sir, these false and arrogant assertions and predictions, uniformly contradicted by experience, which have brought the country into its present perilous condition, though they were not, in my opinion, at the time sufficient grounds of confidence in these men, are undoubtedly now good parliamentary grounds of inquiry into the conduct of these false prophets and tricking impostors. As the ministers deluded former parliaments into the war, by pretending objects, all of which have been yielded by the peace; and (as he now contends) without prejudice to the honour or safety of the country; so did he no less strangely delude them and corrupt them to support him in subverting the constitution under the pretence of resisting innovation and change. The fundamental laws have been altered; every constitutional land-mark removed; all has been taken away except abuses and corruptions, which have been shamefully augmented in the midst of general and national distress; whilst with the one hand the minister has heaped abuse upon abuse, burthen upon burthen upon the back of the people, with the other he has taken from them every thing valuable in the constitution, and which could render even their former burthens tolerable or fit to be endured. I will venture to say there is no condition or situation in the country, from the highest to the lowest, considered individually, as private citizens, or collectively as constituted authorities, which has not been materially

Digitized by Google

altered. The situation of the king, the situation of the queen, the situation of the prince of Wales, whose rights have been as little respected as those of any other class, and who has been treated with scandalous insult and indignity; the situation of both Houses of parliament, of the judges, the laws, the magistracy, the militia, the Bank, the city of London, the East Indies, the West Indies, Scotland, Ireland, the condition of the people at large,—all has been totally altered under the pretence of resisting innovation and change. To effect this change was the real and ultimate object of the war. "My sounding steps," thought he, "will not be heard amidst the din of war." It was against the liberties and properties, the laws and constitution, manners, customs, habits, and character of Englishmen, that ministers contended, it was against the very existence of the Irish, as a people that they conspired and levied war. And in this war upon our people at home, it must be confessed, their success has been as complete as their failure and disappointment abroad.

Having detailed their failures and defeats, the painful task remains of enumerating their triumphs and their victories. The liberty of the press has been violated, by laying printers and publishers under new and unconstitutional restraints, placing them entirely at the mercy of government. He must be a bold man who will venture to put pen to paper, especially since the punishment of libel has been altered and a second conviction made transportation to Botany Bay. Libel is the easiest of all charges to be brought against any man; a man deaf and dumb, who can neither write nor read, may be guilty of libel: a sign post is a libel; a scare crow set up in a garden is a libel, motions of our hands or fingers are libels. —A man may be put in peril, without that provision which the constitution had made to prevent men being brought into danger of trial without reasonable ground, —the intervention of a grand jury, or in cases of private libel an affidavit filed as to the fact. Add to this, the other abuse of introducing Special Juries in criminal cases, at first instituted for the mere purpose of determining upon merchants accounts by merchants, according to the spirit of the law; and we know how these juries are chosen, I may almost say picked out, by the master of the crown office. So that in the case of libel, a man is exposed to the expense and danger of trial at the will of the crown, prosecuted by the crown, before a jury chosen by the crown, and by judges dependent upon the crown for large salaries upon retiring from office. Star chamber sentences have been pronounced for the most trifling political offences, and men convicted of libel have had judgment hanging over their heads for years, to the disgrace of the administration of justice, and let fall to crush them when they became obnoxious to ministers. The judges too are in the unconstitutional habit of remanding to prison convicted persons to be brought up for judgment on the last day of term, and frequently in the term following, by which means it is possible they may receive instruction from the court as to the sentences they shall pronounce. And for the first time a most dangerous precedent has been established of granting a new trial in a criminal case, an abuse which has hitherto been confined to cases of a civil nature; an abuse which converts the substantial protection of trial by jury into a mere shadow, which violates the great ruling principle of our criminal law that a man shall not be put in danger twice for the same offence, and which sets the judge above the law. And to compleat the whole, the attorney-general has dared to threaten juries, and talk to them of a writ of attaint.—The freedom of speech has been destroyed, and above fifty persons forbid to meet to discuss public grievances under penalty of death by military execution.—The trial by jury in multiplied instances, is almost all where taxes are concerned, and where the dispute being for property between the subject and the crown, there is most need of its protection, has been taken away; and the arbitrary jurisdiction of justices and commissioners substituted in its place. Landed property has been confiscated to an immense amount, under the specious name of a sale of the land tax. This is the last expedient of a spendthrift profligate government, but no new scheme. Other countries have followed the same course, and been ruined by it. But what is the meaning of selling a tax? What is a tax? A tax is no property. What has a man purchased by it? Nothing, but the probability of an additional tax. Having purchased this, a new tax will be laid, which in its turn may be sold, as they call it, that is the landed proprietor may be called upon to

Digitized by Google

advance sixteen or seventeen, or eighteen years taxes at once, and if he refuse to be so cheated, deluded, and robbed as to purchase his own property, the government puts in a co-proprietor with him, having a prior claim upon his estate. A new land tax will then be laid, this may again be sold, and new proprietors put in upon him, so that in a course of years, by the simple operation of what is called the sale of the land tax, a gentleman of landed property may find himself in possession of nothing of his own estate but the title deeds.

The income tax has created an inquisitorial power of the most partial, offensive, and cruel nature. The whole transactions of a life may be inquired into, family affairs laid open, and an Englishman, like a culprit, summoned to attend commissioners, compelled to wait like a lacquey in their anti-chamber from day to day until they are ready to institute their inquisition into his property; put to his oath, after all perhaps disbelieved, surcharged and stigmatized as perjured, without any redress from or appeal to a jury of his country. And it is worth remarking too, that a little before the introduction of this unprincipled scheme of plunder, the law of perjury was altered, and the punishment made transportation to Botany Bay. Sir, the repeal of this tax is not sufficient remedy for its infamy; its principle must be stigmatized and branded.

Add to this the innumerable wanton, harassing and disproportioned penalties to support our overgrown system of taxation, converting England into an Excise office, and one part of the people into spies and informers, to prey upon the other. The whole practice relating to custody has been changed, about which the wise and humane spirit of the old law of England was so scrupulously nice, as well it might, for upon that chiefly depends all the protection of those at the best ill-protected and unfortunate creatures, prisoners, who even with all that precaution must inevitably be left too much at the discretion of gaolers. Now, however, all protection is withdrawn, close custody and the infamous practice of changing from custody to custody, and of sending men to be imprisoned in distant places, one of the heaviest grievances complained of under the Stuarts, reintroduced contrary to the most sacred fundamental laws of the constitution.

The treason laws, too, have been altered, because the old law of Edward 3rd was too clear and distinct. They were bungling traitors, it was said, who could not avoid the operation of a law so well understood. Therefore they made new laws to insnare and entrap men's lives, introducing the horrible and atrocious doctrine of constructive and complicated treason. Meetings for parliamentary reform may be construed treason. Under the old law they had tried it without success. It was too plain, and former wicked attempts had been worn out by adjudication. Therefore, said ministers, we must have new laws, under which there have been no decisions, where the judge may range with discretion, wide as his conscience will permit, where there are no legal land-marks, no boundaries to direct or control; then we shall see who will dare to complain of any grievance, or even hint at reform. And whilst they make new laws, introducing the atrocious doctrine of constructive treason, they also make the judges who are to construe them, dependent upon the crown for large salaries when they retire from office.

It was an accusation brought against Caligula, that he wrote his laws so small, and hung them up so high, that the people could scarcely read them; but our ministers go much farther—they make laws that every man can read, but that no man can understand. They have erected bastiles, they have chosen their military posts, and encircled the land with barracks in order, to use their own expression, "to make the soldiers deaf, if they could not make the people dumb." They have upon all occasions called in the military force, and neglected and degraded the civil power in the hands of the citizens.—They have organized a system of spies, undermining the morality, corrupting the integrity of the nation, poisoning every source of social happiness, destroying all confidence between man and man; and thus have they triumphed over the manners, habits, customs, and character of Englishmen.—They have contrived to destroy all sense of shame and honour amongst public men; so that the people can no longer place any dependence upon professions ever so public; for the same man who is loud in professions of patriotism and reform to-day, shall have no longer the slightest difficulty to recant to-morrow, leaving his most solemn pledges to the public, and his pawned honour un-

Digitized by Google

redeemed, with only modestly confessing, that to-day he is grown wiser than he was yesterday. So that all the ties of honest fellowship are dissolved, private honour, private friendship, public principle, all borne down by the overwhelming tide of corruption, which sets full in for despotism at home, which must assuredly produce final destruction from abroad.

But our ministers have not only taken away the old laws of the land, and substituted new ones, in violation of every fundamental principle of the constitution, but they have transgressed even these, and acted, to use their own expression, with "a vigour beyond the law." They have new-modelled the police upon the plan of the old despotism of France; they have created a lieutenant de police, with an immense salary under the title of Third Secretary of State, contrary to law. They have selected the lowest and the meanest creatures, whom they have invested with the sacred authority of the magistracy, needy men, depending upon pensions for bread; and having extended the power of these men beyond all former bounds, they have placed their secret and and murderous dungeons under the direction and management of these pensioned justices. They have, without even the form of the previous consent of parliament, bringing thereby this House into contempt and degradation, sent the money of the people out, and brought German mercenaries into the kingdom, rightly judging them fitter instruments than English soldiers for their designs.

Year after year have they suspended the Habeas Corpus act; and thus armed, they have issued general warrants; arrested indiscriminately, and then selected such persons, not as they had any information against, but as they suspected they should be able to extort information from. Knowing what they deserved, they could not believe but that all men were conspiring against them. They have refused to give copies of the warrants for arrest and commitment to the persons whom they have arrested; and the government agent, when applied to, has declared frankly that he would rather pay the legal penalties than give up any such copies. Having chosen their victims, they commenced their inquisition, the process of which was varied, according to the supposed temper and disposition of the prisoner. Some were loaded with irons, and plunged at once into all the horrors of Coldbath-fields; others undergo a different treatment; they are sent to messengers houses, where they are indulged with food and fire, comfortably lodged; the messenger's business being to pump his prisoner, and perpetually to represent to him the terrors of Coldbath-fields and governor Aris, hoping good naturedly that he will escape them by giving information, or, as they term it "singing out." In this state of preparation the prisoner is brought up to be examined, when the first question asked by the dignified magistrate, who presides at these inquisitorial proceedings, is, in the cant phrase of a thief-taker, whether the prisoner will sing out or not? Most of these unfortunate men, having no song gratifying to the ear of the worthy magistrate, and preferring cold and hunger to giving false information, are then sent to Coldbath-fields, and recommended to the care of governor Aris. This perhaps may serve to explain to the public the mystery of that invisible shield which hangs over this monster of protected cruelty, notwithstanding his acknowledged enormities, and the universal indignation of the country, all of which have only led, as I am informed, to an augmentation of his salary of an additional hundred a year. But those enormities are too great to be treated of here incidentally, or to be made part of any other question; they shall again be brought before this House, and the public, by themselves.—Thrust then into a solitary cell in this prison, where thirst, and hunger, and every species of cruelty is practised and endured, unpitied and unseen, exposed even to personal violence; and having suffered it in several instances from the brutal ferocity of Aris; cut off from every consolation which the most inhuman have seldom denied their victims, even wives and children excluded; in this close, cruel, illegal custody have ministers kept men, without charge, without knowing their accusers, without daring to bring a man to trial. At length, some at the end of two, some at the end of three, one has been imprisoned the greater part of seven years, with ruined fortunes, broken health, broken hearts almost, are they permitted to rejoin, witness, and partake the miseries of their starving families. To crown all, ministers have prevailed upon this House to reject the petitions of men they have thus treated, and to pass, without any inquiry, a bill of indemnity for these

Digitized by Google

ministers and gaolers. A plain proof which of the two broke the law, the accused, or the accusers. This indemnity bill is the most fatal measure which has yet been adopted; it is the final blow, holds up the constitution to contempt and scorn, makes the much-talked-of responsibility of ministers a thing rather to be laughed at than feared; and, to render it altogether as ludicrous as it is wicked and profligate, the present ostensible minister, at the same time that he passes this bill of indemnity for his predecessor, creator, and patron, tells us, he means, by pursuing the same system, to stand in need of a similar bill, and hopes his successor will do as much for him when he is to go out of office. Why, Sir, this bill of indemnity of itself requires another bill of indemnity; and so ministers may wish us to go on, passing indemnity upon indemnity for every species of atrocity, till at length we have brought ourselves into such general abhorrence, that the people of England, like the people of Ireland, shall be glad to get rid of us at all events, to be eased of the burthen of the parliament. We may then be ordered, like the Irish parliament, to do one act of suicidal justice upon ourselves, and to terminate our own existence. But, Sir, this is not merely a bill of indemnity; had it been so, it would have been sufficient to have secured ministers, after a strict inquiry into their conduct, against the legal damages which might have been awarded; so the law would have kept its course; but this would by no means have answered the purpose, which was, not so much to indemnify ministers, as to prevent the tale from being told; to prevent their infamy from coming out: therefore it was necessary to reject petitions, stating the horrid facts of which themselves were ashamed; therefore it was necessary to clear your gallery when these petitions were read; therefore it was necessary to bar up the doors of the courts of justice, in order to prevent any well-authenticated account of their conduct coming before the public.

Before I quit this subject, I beg leave once more to repeat the case of these men, of whose treatment I complain; and let no man be so weak and childish as to imagine his life can be a moment safe, or depends upon any better security than the discretion of the executive, if corruption has attained such a height that ministers can commit such acts with impunity; if such is the wretched state of the representation, that the House of Commons, which, according to the constitution, should be the jealous observer and controller of the acts of the executive, the protector and guardian of the people and the laws, can be prevailed upon to indemnify ministers without any inquiry into or explanation of such conduct. Here are men taken up, kept in abhorred close custody, without charge, without accusers, without trial, bankrupt in fortune and health, their petitions rejected, the course of justice turned aside; and all this flagrant violation of the laws, constitution, common sense, and common humanity, to cover and conceal the foul infamy of ministers. Upon this one act I might fairly rest my demand for an inquiry. That they have broken the law, is not a matter of opinion or doubt; here is their own confession of their guilt. Or, is the breach of law no guilt in those who are intrusted with the guardianship of the laws? And shall they be protected in the actual violation, whilst the people are tormented upon suspicion? I own, Sir, I did not think all that haughtiness we have witnessed, that disdain they pretended of shrinking from responsibility, volunteering one for another more than an equal share, when the day of inquiry should arrive—I did not think it would have ended in a full confession of their guilt, and pleading a pardon in court. I expected that they would have boldly relied for their defence upon the necessity of the case; that they would have proved to us the reality of all those deep-laid plots and conspiracies, which they assured us existed, though at the time they demanded confidence, because it was unsafe to unfold to us their knowledge upon the subject. Sir, I have a right to expect, at this time, that the contents of those green boxes and green bags, entrusted before to their own chosen secret committees, should now be produced to this House at large; for now we find all these alarms prove to be mere cheat, trick and delusion, to answer ministerial ends; and these dangerous men, as they were falsely pretended to be, let loose upon the public, bailed some of them by the very Bow-street runners who apprehended them, as if the object was to turn the law into ridicule and contempt.

Sir, we have heard much of the blessings of our happy constitution; but look at the real situation of the country; 550 millions of debt—barracks and bastiles—the Habeas Corpus act absolutely destroy.

Digitized by Google

ed; for the frequency, long continuance, and facility of its suspension, has totally annihilated the confidence of the subject—an army of spies and informers—an inquisition of property—an inquisition of political opinion—a shackled and corrupted press—a gagged and beggared people—pensioned justices—eventually salaried judges—vague laws—threatened juries—an executive magistrate not accountable—a degraded aristocracy—a confiding parliament, and irresponsible and indemnified ministers. What is there in this system so admirable, to recompense the people of England for the immense sacrifices they are called upon daily and hourly to make for its support.

Sir, the situation of this country is, God knows, deplorable enough; but if we turn our eyes to Ireland, we shall find the despotism completed there, of which the foundations deep and broad are laid here. Painful as is the recital of the woful measures pursued by ministers in Ireland, they are too important to be passed over, or to be lightly touched on. They must be fully exposed to the view of this House, and of the people of England, who, I am sorry to say, are either wholly ignorant of the transactions that have taken place in that ill-fated country, or, what is worse, have received a false account of them, propagated with uncommon assiduity by ministers and their agents. To remove this prejudice, and to enable the House to form an impartial opinion of the conduct of ministers, it will be necessary to take ground as far back as the cause which gave rise to these events. At the conclusion of the American war (a war undertaken precisely on the same principles as that against France), out of 12,000 men, composing the standing army of Ireland, 9,000 were transported across the Atlantic to fight the battles of England in America; and Ireland, left to herself, exhibited the grand spectacle of a volunteer army, self-raised, self-paid, self-clothed, self-armed, not subject to martial law, a debating army, choosing its own officers, canvassing public measures, submitting to no other articles of war than public opinion, to no other mutiny bill than private honour. Then, too, France threatened invasion, but received no encouragement, because the people, though mal-treated, hoped the time of their deliverance was at hand, and that an honest parliament, such as they believed then sat, would redress their grievances, which were listened to with attention, and discussed with temper and moderation. There were no laws passed to prevent public meetings, or to throw obstacles in the way of petitions; the Habeas Corpus act was not suspended; there were no burnings, rapes, or massacres; military tribunals did not usurp the place of courts of justice; free quarters were unheard-of; torture was unknown. There were no Indemnity bills, government and its agents having committed none of those crimes which have since driven the people to madness. These were the reasons why France, if ever she had entertained an idea of a descent on Ireland, had not the temerity to put it in execution, well knowing that a nation so defended by citizen soldiers was invincible, and that discomfiture and shame must have attended the undertaking. And that war ended without any such attempt having been made by France, and that parliament closed its labours, after having effected the settlement of 1782, of which we have lately heard so much. A very short time, however, had elapsed before the Irish people perceived that the owners of the representation, for it was then, too, private property, were the only gainers; that the nation had only exchanged the direct legalized control of the English parliament, exercised at a trifling charge, for the indirect corrupt management of the British minister, worked at an enormous cost; and that the system, always radically bad was rendered still more vicious, by holding out a greater temptation to the parliament, from the increased wages of corruption, to betray the interests of Ireland, which have unfortunately, from a short-sighted policy, been always thought incompatible with the interests of this country. The people were quickly convinced by the multiplication of places, the appointment of monopolist natives to fill them, the formation of a national debt, the establishment of a national bank, which at first pleased the vanity of the inconsiderate, were, in fact, stores gathered from the people, and swept into the granaries of the English minister, to be distributed by the hands of his factor, known by the name of secretary to a lord lieutenant, for the purpose of corrupting the self-constituted representative; which supplies so to be distributed were so abundant, that the price of a seat for one election only, rose from 800*l.* to 2,000*l.* in the Commons' House, and in the Upper House, from little or nothing to three, four, and five

Digitized by Google

thousand pounds. The people, at first gratified by the sound of an independent parliament, found, to their cost, it was of them the parliament was independent, and wholly dependent upon the will of the British cabinet.

Thus deluded, the people of Ireland, taught by the eloquence of the late minister, were convinced of the absolute necessity of reform; and, as I have been told, and to the honour of those persons be it spoken, many of the proprietors of boroughs were convinced of that necessity, and offered voluntarily to relinquish their unconstitutional and usurped power. But the right hon. gentleman having in the mean time become prime minister of England, strengthened by troops returned from America, and supported by a majority of the owners of the representation, whose fortunes and whose families were made by this system, resisted every movement towards that reform to which he before led the way. But though the right hon. gentleman had changed his sentiments with his situation, though he had suffered his interest to extinguish his principles, though he might have been very anxious to throw the veil of oblivion over the speeches of the thatched house orator; those speeches, replete with common sense and truth, had made too deep an impression to be easily effaced: on the contrary, the more rapid were his strides through the mire of corruption, the more deeply were his former sentiments engraved on the minds of the people, whom every day's experience more and more confirmed in the necessity of reform; towards the attainment of which desirable end, considerable progress had been made, when it was suddenly arrested by those who, having monopolized the power of the country, were against every species of real and wholesome reform. Though the progress of reform was thus arrested, the principle was never for a moment abandoned; and in this state of corruption on the part of the British minister, of bare-faced, unblushing venality on the part of the Irish parliament, and of anxious hope and expectation on the part of the people, did things remain from the year 1788 till the year 1791, when the people determined to use every exertion to obtain a fair representation, which the right hon. gentleman had told them ought to be the express image of the people. To effect this purpose, it was necessary to embrace every description of persons, and to avoid all religious prejudices, the rock on which reform had hitherto split. To effect this, some of the most enlightened and strenuous advocates of reform composed a test, conceived in the following terms: "In the awful presence of God, I "declare that I will, as far as in me lies, "endeavour to promote a brotherhood of "affection and union amongst Irishmen of "every religious persuasion; and that I "will persevere in my endeavours to pro-"cure a full, equal, and adequate repre-"sentation of all the people in Ireland in "parliament." Thus the work of reconciliation and union was in rapid progress; many societies of the coalesced sects, better known by the name of United Irishmen, were formed, and every thing wore an aspect favourable to peace, mutual affection and reform. The parliament having itself, in 1793, taken up the subject, seemed to evince so much firmness in the entertainment of it, that no fewer than eleven committees of the House of Commons sat in the session of that year, for the purpose of taking the state of the representation into consideration. These were alarming measures; Irishmen united were not to be endured; and the right hon. gentleman, who had studied reform, one may suppose, only with a view of learning the most efficacious mode of counteracting it, here took his stand, threw down the gauntlet of defiance to the Irish people, and commanded the independent parliament to pass, not a resolution for reform, but the notorious Convention bill, the object of which was, to quash the united societies, and to prevent all political meetings. From this time the meetings which had hitherto been held openly were convened privately; became numerous in proportion to the means taken to obstruct them, and perseveringly maintained their principles of union and reform. Attempts at reform without union would not have alarmed: religious bigotry would have easily frustrated them: it was the union of Irishmen that struck terror to the soul of ministers, because, by the disunion of the Protestant, the Catholic and the Presbyterian, they were enabled to hold Ireland in a state of abject slavery. Recourse therefore was had to the disunion of the sects, and the papering and racking system was adopted, which expelled from their habitations thousands of families, by a process the most atrocious. A paper was pasted against the doors of the cottages of the Catholics commanding the inhabitants to

Digitized by Google

quit in five or ten days, and to proceed to the province of Connaught, or they should be sent to hell; and this was the revival, after a century, of that faction known under the name of Orange-men. These mandates not being at first complied with, the fanatics who had issued them repaired to the houses of the unfortunate Catholics, ousted the whole family, and racked and set fire to the miserable hovel and its contents. Such transactions could not fail to attract notice. Many of the authors of them were committed to prison; and his majesty's attorney-general was sent to the theatre where these tragedies had been acted, to prosecute the offenders who were all acquitted, except one, and he was pardoned. After this farce, which served as a manifesto to every ruffian agent of government; after such a pardon, which may be considered as an act of outlawry against the whole Catholic body, it is not to be wondered at, if those Catholics who had not yet been papered and racked, should, dreading a repetition of the same system, and having no protection from law, proceed to deprive the Orange-men, who were the authors of these proceedings, of their arms, themselves having been kept disarmed.

This proceeding answered the purpose of ministers; it afforded an opportunity of disuniting Irishmen of different persuasions; of protecting one sect, and of stirring it up to take vengeance on the other. But as the ordinary forms of law were tedious and uncertain, they determined to fling off the cumbrous load of statute, and let loose upon the people a deluded army, the officers of which were to serve as a magistracy, erected a military tribunal, where they sat, tried, sentenced, and condemned, without law, not a few individuals only, but whole tribes whom they hurried on board tenders. And this conspiracy of British ministers was not only indemnified, but an act was passed, in addition to their former acts, empowering magistrates to commit, according to law, similar outrages to those they had before perpetrated contrary to law. And by the operation of this law, which was not a dead letter, was the great body of an unarmed people put out of the protection of law, and consigned to the mercy of a licentious army. Thus having committed the parliament against the people, Ireland was invaded, upon pretence of supporting that parliament with troops of all descriptions, Scotch Fencibles, English Fencibles, Ancient British, Hessians, and Hanoverians, were all let loose upon the people, committed such abominations of plunder, arson, rape, and massacre, that the whole island groaned beneath the weight. To the executive, backed by these auxiliaries, the parliament surrendered the country, and abolished the small remnant of law; and upon the representation of martial magistrates, that the country was in a state of disturbance, or likely to become so, martial law, as it was called, was set up, or rather all law was pulled down. Under cover of this, private enemies were proscribed in the name of public justice, all Ireland was proclaimed, and military execution closed the scene. Such was the state of the army, halloed on by ministers upon the people, that Abercromby, when placed at the head of it, declared it was formidable to every one except the enemy. When he accepted that appointment, little did he imagine the first order he should be required to issue would be for the distribution of the army at free quarters upon the people. And little did ministers, who dared to make that requisition, know of the good and gallant Abercromby; he was a soldier of honour, and had embraced the profession of arms, when the duty of a British officer was, to protect the lives of his fellow citizens, to contend against the foreign enemy, to soften the horrors of war by keeping those under his command within the strict bounds of discipline, and due subordination; instructing them not to practise cruelties, or shed unnecessary blood. These were the maxims Abercromby had learned; these he taught; these he practised: he disdained to be made the instrument of such a minister, for such a purpose, and resigned his appointment to an army of which he was not allowed the command. More compliance was easily found in those who succeeded the virtuous Abercromby; and the pack unkennelled, flushed in blood, prowled at free quarters over the face of the land, the object of which was, as avowed, to drive the people into premature insurrection. Still the people forbore to rise: a more active stimulus was employed; torture was introduced; triangles were erected in the very court yard of the vice regal palace; the cries and groans of the tortured assailed the ears of the viceroy, and as he rode through the gates of his castle, his horse's hoofs were bathed in the blood of the people. At length the

Digitized by Google

unarmed people rose; thousands were killed in the field of battle, where no prisoners were made, no quarter given; and thousands were barbarously butchered afterwards in their huts, and in the fields. It was after the battle was over, that the horrors of war began. The excesses of the people I will not stop to consider; they are equally the disgrace of the government; suffice it to say, the worst passions of the human soul were called forth on every side: in the dreadful catalogue of crimes committed by the ministers and people, the people however have not to answer for the violation of women, or torture of men. The insurrection (an unequivocal proof to the minister of the cordial hatred of the people for their parliament), being put down, the time was arrived for the completion of his original design; and, as he had before conspired with the parliament against the people, he was now to conspire with the army against the parliament. That army which the Irish parliament foolishly imagined had invaded Ireland for the protection of its political power, was now to be turned against the parliament for its political extinction; that parliament upon which the minister was wont to lavish praises for its firmness, wisdom, and magnanimity; that independent parliament, which he said had by its energy preserved Ireland to the British empire; that parliament, which never ceased to revile and libel the Irish people, was now in its turn to be stigmatised; to be represented, by its former panegyrist, as a corrupt assembly, full of provincial ignorance, local prejudice, ungovernable passions, incompetent to legislate for that country: it had brought the nation, he said, to the brink of a precipice, and had endangered the British connexion itself. And all these acts which I have related, to the commission of which it had been excited by ministers, and which are recorded in blood in the chronicles of Ireland, were now produced as evidence of its guilt. And having given these acts in evidence, the minister put the parliament to the torture, as it had tortured the people, to confess. It did confess, and he sentenced the self-convicted traitor to die by its own felonious hand. And this act of compelled political suicide, he called their assent to a union. To effect this revolution was the Irish parliament excited by ministers to declare war against the people, and to wage that war in a manner the bare recollection of which makes humanity shudder.

Sir, I have gone so much into this detail, because it has been asserted, that Irish union and reform were generated by the French revolution; that the principle was a French principle; a new doctrine created by the French war. But facts speak for themselves, and every fact speaks the reverse of this assertion. The necessity of reform was felt by the Irish people during the American war. The motives to reform were strengthened by the reasoning and eloquence of the right hon. gentleman himself, before he became minister, and by the Letter of the duke of Richmond, before he was appointed master-general of the ordnance, to colonel Sharman, chairman of the celebrated meeting of the Irish volunteers at Dungannon, convened for the express purpose of reform. The question was again and again discussed in the House of Commons itself, and occupied the attention of all Ireland ten years before the French revolution. And what produced it? The very constitution of that parliament; representatives of their own property, and owners of the representation, plundering the nation; its matchless venality and corruption; its uniformly betraying the interests of Ireland to the British cabinet; its resistance to the moderate, just demands of the people. These were the reasons, growing out of the system and organization itself, that impressed on the minds of the people of Ireland the absolute necessity of reform. And who can deny those reasons to have been just? Their House of Commons has been proved to be private property; it has been paid for, bought and sold, and the bills for the purchase-money now lie upon your table. But the right hon. gentleman himself saw the necessity of reforming this corrupt and incompetent parliament. The people of Ireland and the minister only differed as to the species of reform. They were of opinion, that a native resident parliament, having the same feelings and the same interest with the people, and not representing their own private property; they were of opinion, that this was the true character of a constitutional House of Commons. But the right hon. gentleman, formerly the great reformer, was now of opinion, that a foreign parliament, composed of men, between whom and the people there existed no sympathy, no identity of interests, ignorant and regardless of their

Digitized by Google

wishes, wants, and character, receiving information of that people through the medium of those very persons whom he represented as so full of prejudice, local animosity, heat and passion, as not to be fit to govern Ireland. This is the species of reform, according to the right hon. gentleman's opinion now, best suited to the people of that country; and to project this species of reform, projected by him at the time of the regency, has he strode over mountains of carcases, and waded through oceans of blood.

Thus, then, have ministers, though they have failed in their foreign objects, been far from being altogether unsuccessful. Though they have failed in their attempt to conquer France, they have made a shameful conquest of the rights and liberties of England. They have flogged, tortured, and massacred the people of Ireland. They have bought the representation of that country, and made a complete revolution in the representation of this. This is their indemnity for the past, and security for the future. This compensates for every other disgrace, failure, and disaster. This is the reform which the right hon. gentleman promised us. He did indeed formerly promise us a hundred knights; but he did not at that time tell us he would bring them from Ireland.

Sir, when I reflect upon the enormities which have been committed in that country, I really feel ashamed of my species—ashamed of being a man! but when I consider that they have been supported by English power, I feel ashamed of my country. When I recollect that a British minister, in a British House of Commons, has dared to vindicate the use of torture, which even the Inquisition has at length, through shame, abandoned, the last of infamies seems to be an Englishman. The bloody monster Robespierre, who only inflicted death upon his victims, appears, by a comparison with him, to be an angel of mercy. No Sicilian tyrant, not one, nor all the twelve Cæsars together, none of the monsters who have hitherto appeared in human shape, and been held up to, and inherited the execration of mankind, ever exceeded the cruelties practised under the late ministers, which have covered Ireland with blood, and England with infamy and disgrace.

And can we permit this to be washed in Lethe and forgotten? Is not the time yet arrived, or is there no time for inquiry into such unprecedented conduct? And shall we allow ministers, by a miserable juggle and sham change of administration amongst their own creatures and partisans, to escape unquestioned? and the people of England and Ireland to be disgraced abroad and enslaved at home? Hitherto, failure abroad, and unconstitutional acts at home, have been deemed good parliamentary grounds of inquiry. It is high time to inquire into, and have defined, the real object of the late war. It is fit to inquire, if such a peace as the present is safe and honourable, why negotiation even was rejected before.

But, Sir, the whole situation of the country, external and internal (the latter infinitely more important), demands immediate inquiry. The scandalous imprisonments, the cruel tortures, the disaffection of Ireland, the distresses of the people of England, the monstrous corruptions, profligate expenditure, prisons, courts of justice (all the productions of that wicked administration), all cry aloud for inquiry.

This, Sir, is a melancholy picture of the situation of this country. A situation in many respects similar to that in which it stood at the end of the American war. At that time, the country was threatened with dangers unprecedented before, though trifling in comparison with the dangers and difficulties that threaten us now. Then too, as now, and as is natural after a wicked and unsuccessful war, there was, apparently, a division and difference of opinion amongst ministers; of whom the right hon. gentleman gave the following description:—"There is only one thing," said he, "in which they seem to agree, in their resolution to destroy the empire they were called upon to save; and this, I fear, they will accomplish before the indignation of a great and suffering people shall fall upon their heads in the punishment they deserve. May God grant that punishment be not so long delayed, as to involve within it a great and innocent family, who, though they can have had no share in the guilt, may, and most likely will, be doomed to suffer the consequences!"* So said the right hon. gentleman then. So say I now. At that time, he unquestionably, in my mind, spoke the language of patriotism and truth, and met with that support from the people of England, which that language undoubtedly deserved. And what was that language?

* See vol. 22, p. 845.

Digitized by Google

Justice for the past, by the punishment of those wicked ministers who had carried on that detestable war; and security to the people in future for their rights and liberties, by the only means by which justice and freedom can be secured to any nation upon earth—a fair representation of the people in parliament. That opinion of his, which was good then, is good now, or rather better now, confirmed as it is by woful experience. He then foretold the evils that would inevitably follow, if the course he then recommended was not pursued. He then said, and said truly, that no honest man could serve the country under so corrupt a system of representation; that if an administration was formed of the ablest and honestest men, with such a system of representation, they could not only do no good, but even with all their exertions, and all their endeavours, it would be impossible for them to avoid a recurrence of similar or greater misfortunes. The right hon. gentleman foretold all this, and is now in the singular predicament of being at once the teacher and example of the truth of his own doctrine. The right hon. gentleman, however, did not foretel us the full extent of the evils we were to endure. He only told us the evils that could not be avoided, even by an administration composed of the wisest and best men in the country. He did not tell us what himself could do. He did not tell us the extent of the calamities we were to suffer under an administration composed of the worst men in the country; under an administration, of which himself was the head, in conjunction with those very men whom he had before held up as the wickedest men in the country, and as fit objects of public indignation and public vengeance. Those evils we now feel; and I now tell the people of Great Britain and Ireland, as he told them at the close of the American war, that they have no choice between ruin and reform. I call upon the gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland to stand forward at length in defence of the rights of the people at large. This is their natural position, the post of interest as well as honour; and let us all, before it becomes too late, set about reforming those abuses which disgust the country, and weigh the people to the earth. Consider, our next war with France will probably be carried on in Great Britain; and if you wish for energy and exertion, you must not be out of love with democracy. If you want virtue, you must give it motives. If you want patriotism, you must afford a patria, by a fair government, embracing and taking in the people, by restoring to the people their rights, and giving them security for their enjoyment, by a fair representation in this House. Thus, by uniting all classes in one common interest, you may defy the power of France, aggrandized as she is; or of the world, could it be placed in one giant arm; and, what is more, you may defy wicked, corrupt, and profligate ministers.

Sir, I am only an humble imitator of the right hon. gentleman. I follow the conduct he pursued at the end of the American war. His advice to the nation at the end of that war was wise, and, had it been followed, would have prevented the calamities of this. I now require on the part of the people, that justice which he then demanded. I demand inquiry, in order that punishment should follow guilt, as an example to ministers hereafter, and as the previous and necessary step to reform, which can alone secure the people in future. Sir, I have now performed my duty to the people, to the utmost of my power; and I have only to say, that if, after a war the most burthensome, bloody, and calamitous, this country ever was engaged in, ending in a peace which places it in a situation critical and perilous beyond all former example; if after the most flagrant and daring violation of the laws and constitution, no inquiry shall be granted into the conduct of those who have been intrusted with the administration, I shall indeed believe, that the destinies of France (a term much used of late in this House) do lead that country to universal empire, and this to be enslaved and destroyed by a set of the most rash, wicked, and unwise men that ever were entrusted with the affairs of a great nation. I therefore move, "That this House will resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, to inquire into the conduct of the late Administration both at home and abroad during the war."

Mr. *Sturt* seconded the motion.

Earl *Temple* felt that an apology was due to the House, for taking notice of a speech, the most extravagant, be believed that ever was uttered within those walls. A speech with more of assumption and less of proof, never, he believed, was spoken—a speech fraught with arguments

Digitized by Google

(if arguments they could be called), which, though repeatedly urged year after year, and as often refuted, yet which, whenever they were offered, ought not to be suffered to pass unanswered. The hon. baronet's avowed object was, an inquiry into the conduct of the late administration, against whom he levelled the most unqualified abuse; but, notwithstanding the asperities thus cast on them, their conduct would bear the strictest examination. The hon. baronet had endeavoured to blend the measures of the former administration with those of the present; but in relation to the war, they ought to be kept distinct and separate. The present was not the fit opportunity for discussing the merits of the peace; and the measures of the war could only be discussed with reference to the administration when they went out of office in 1801; and whether they had acted in the conduct of the war in a manner justifiable or not, he thought the hon. baronet had completely failed in the proof of the charges which he urged against them. Before the hon. baronet proceeded to the accusation of his majesty's late ministers, for entering upon, and following up the war, he should first have called upon the House to rescind those resolutions by which their approbation was repeatedly expressed, year after year, to those measures so strenuously condemned by the hon. baronet; but to this the hon. baronet would find it no easy task to persuade the House. Lord Temple then entered generally into a defence of the late administration, and argued, that it had been repeatedly shown, that France, and not England, first commenced hostilities, but that, though this country did not begin, the aggressive conduct of France was such as must have forced us to commence hostilities, if France had not taken the lead. The hon. baronet had said, that we had failed in the objects of the war; but this he denied. The true object of the war was, to repel Jacobinical politics, and the attempts made by the intrigues of France to overturn all constitutions and governments, and particularly our own; and in both we had completely succeeded. We had protected our own colonies, and captured those of the enemy. We had been completely victorious in the East; and the exploits of our fleets and armies, so far as they depended upon his majesty's late ministers, had been everywhere honourable to the British name. If the hon. baronet was mistaken in his assertion, as to the motives, conduct, and consequences of the war, he was not less so in his description of the British constitution, which, so far from being of that stubborn and immutable nature under all exigencies, as the hon. baronet would insist, happily admitted of contraction or expansion, according to the exigencies of times and occasions; and could, on many occasions, derive strength from placing strong measures in the power of the executive. The hon. baronet's speech, fraught as it was with violence, and assertion unsupported by fact, might serve the purpose of a tavern harangue. His clamour about bastiles and arbitrary imprisonments was well calculated to rouse the spirit of a mob, and excite to popular commotion, but was ill fitted to the decorum or dignity of that House. The cry of No Bastile! was the artifice of those who first excited to the late revolution the people of Paris. They were told, that when that fortress was razed, their liberties would be secure. But what was the proof on its demolition? why that one solitary prisoner only was confined in it; and what the result? why so far was liberty from being secured by the demolition of the Bastile, that every church became a prison under the tyranny of the revolters. His lordship next adverted to the affairs of Ireland, and vindicated the conduct of the friends of government in this country, by stating the apparent symptoms of revolutionary spirit which were so strong in that country, and the declarations contained in the proclamations prepared by the Sheares, and the other leaders of the rebellion, to give no quarter to those who should oppose them. The imprisonment of suspected persons in this country was another topic for the hon. baronet's declamation; but he verily believed, that if the twenty-six friends of the people, so much the object of the hon. baronet's commiseration, had not been imprisoned, this country would have gone very near to be pushed into commotion and bloodshed. The hon. baronet's wish seemed to be, to impress the House with an idea, that, from the conclusion of the American war, the object of the Irish malcontents was only a parliamentary reform; but if the hon. baronet would only advert to the declaration made by Arthur O'Connor, the principal leader of the Irish rebellion, and of whose constitutional principles the hon. baronet at one time thought so highly he would find the idea of parliamentary reform laughed at as a mere joke, and

Digitized by Google

that nothing short of revolution and a republic was their real object. With respect to our perseverance in the war with France, and the repeated failure of overtures set on foot for the restoration of peace, his majesty's ministers were equally blameless, and their conduct had been repeatedly approved by parliament. Negotiations on our part were never deferred, nor declined, but when the fugacity of ostensible power in the men who, from time to time, composed the revolutionary government of France, left no security whatever for the observance of any treaty, or the permanence of any peace which could be concluded. The last overtures at Lisle, on the ground of pacific negotiation, was for a naval armistice, which must have allowed to France the power of recruiting her navy, and left this country at the mercy of the naval coalition since attempted to be formed against her; but such a proposition could only be listened to with indignation. Parliament and the country at large with one voice approved the rejection of overtures on such a ground, and the result had eminently justified our refusal. When Buonaparté, with a rash and despotic hand, seized on the reins of government, and proposed overtures of peace, his majesty's ministers had too fresh in their recollection the short lived power of his predecessors, to warrant them in the hope that any peace suddenly concluded with him promised greater permanence. But when the people of France, tired of the horrors of the revolutionary conflict that had long torn their country, agreed to confirm his government, and such a degree of stability seemed to attach to it, as warranted a reliance upon a treaty of peace concluded with France, under his direction, overtures were accepted. He was one of those who did not approve the terms of the peace; yet it was pretty plain, that the confidence of his majesty's present ministers, who concluded the peace, was seconded by the confidence of the country, as was obvious from the promptitude of negotiating a loan for 25,000,000*l.* on terms peculiarly advantageous to the public. This was a true criterion that our wealth remained unimpaired. The hon. baronet, (continued the noble lord), has charged ministers with having abandoned the income tax, as being inefficacious and disgraceful to the country. It was a tax instituted for the prosecution of the war; and while it lasted, I never wished it to be relinquished. I consider it as the salvation of the country, by calling forth the energy and the resources of the people. As a war tax, I hope and trust, if any cause should arise to call for extraordinary exertion, that it will be again brought forward, because I think it well calculated for that purpose. The hon. baronet has denominated it a cruel and oppressive measure; but he will recollect, that it originated with the city of London. It was called for by the city, and by the commercial men, who brought it before parliament for its approbation. As to the conduct of a dear and noble relation of mine (lord Grenville) at the time to which the hon. baronet alludes, I shall say nothing; but I do, from the bottom of my heart, believe, that to the wise and upright conduct of the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt) we owe every blessing which we now enjoy, and the privilege of sitting here. The country has borne witness to his abilities, and posterity will do justice to his memory. I am convinced, that to be the object of the calumny of the hon. baronet and his friends, and of their slanderous rancour, is the proudest boast of his heart, satisfied as he must be of having well earned the gratitude and praise of his countrymen. On these grounds, I shall give my decided dissent to the motion.

Mr. *Archdall* begged to acknowledge the compliments which the hon. baronet had paid to the parliament of Ireland, as a cruel, and even as a suicidal body of men; as one of them, he would assure the hon. baronet, that they received all his compliments with the most sovereign acquiescence. As to the ministerial warfare levied against Ireland, it consisted in acts of concession, from the commencement of the war to the union of the parliaments—acts of repeated concession and disappointed conciliation. He then mentioned the different popular acts passed there, particularly the militia bill, to which he said Ireland chiefly owed its preservation at this moment; but which was not what the hon. baronet had recommended, a debating army; and the Roman Catholic bill, of which the Catholics had expressed an opinion, by publishing, that they should for ever remember with the most lively gratitude, the benefits which they had received during the earl of Westmorland's administration: all this war of ministry, the Irish people had happily survived, and found they were existing very well with them; yet lord Westmoreland was one of

Digitized by Google

that ministry, under whose government more good laws had been made for Ireland, than in all the governments of all the lords lieutenant, from lord Wentworth down to lord Wentworth Fitzwilliam. After mentioning this last nobleman with great respect, he said, the next government was a government of self-defence; it was assailed by rebellion and civil war, and was obliged to repel force by force. Could the hon. baronet say, that commotion should go so far, and no farther, and that the hand which might raise a storm could be sure to allay it? As to the free-quartering of the army, he should not defend nor blame it. All he should say was, that it was not an act of the late ministry, but of the regretted character who was then the commander-in-chief, sir Ralph Abercromby. The House would determine what aggressions the late ministry had committed against the constitution, when they considered the union with Ireland—a measure, which, he trusted, would transmit to the latest posterity their names, as the best protectors of an united empire. He would close what he had to say with adverting for a moment to the right hon. gentleman who had been at the head of that ministry, against whom the motion was particularly directed; he adverted to that gentleman with those sensations which inferior minds must feel when they contemplate an object so far above them; but if after a long ministerial life of difficulties, which could only be exceeded by the spirit which surmounted them; if, after years of unceasing exertions and undiminished popularity, he chose to rest from the service of a crown which he had asserted, and a country which he had saved, rich at least in the consciousness of his character, and the patriotism of his labours; if after this some one should come forward to criminate his merits in the parliament which had witnessed them, even he would presume to speak what the right hon. gentleman need not condescend to speak for himself—that to this House it would be enough to say, as his illustrious father said before him, "You know these hands are clean;" and to his accuser it would not be too much to say,

"Disce, puer, virtutem ex me, verumque laborem,
Fortunam ab aliis"——

Mr. *Jones* said, it had been observed by the noble earl, that the speech of the hon. baronet was full of assumption without proof; but of all the speeches he had ever heard, the speech of the noble earl was of that very description. It was not easy to sit silent after hearing the panegyric which the noble earl had uttered in defence of his majesty's late ministers, and of the whole of their measures. Among other subjects of encomium was the income tax, which the noble earl expressed his hope would always be adopted as a war tax in any future contest. But a tax so detestable, he hoped would never again be adopted. By the blessing of God, he would bring forward a question, the decision upon which, he hoped, would brand this tax with some mark of eternal infamy. Was any man prepared to say, that an inquiry should not be instituted into the conduct of a ministry, who had dilapidated 258 millions of the public money, granted 583 pensions, and created 95 peers? If inquiry was resisted, the parliament of this country would soon be placed in the situation in which the hon. baronet had described the parliament of Ireland to have been; it would be compelled to commit an act of suicidal justice.

Lord *Belgrave* thought the motion of the hon. baronet should be converted into a practical compliment to his majesty's late ministers. He should say little with respect to the argument of the hon. baronet; but it appeared to him that, with the sentiments which actuated his mind, he ought to have proposed certain resolutions for the purpose of grounding on them an impeachment. The hon. baronet had not, however, been contented with censuring the conduct of the late ministers, but the present ministers, the parliament, the judges, the police magistrates, the governor of Cold Bath-fields prison, as well as other persons, had come in for a share of the censure. It was well that the speech of the hon. baronet had been made in that House; had it been made elsewhere, at least so far as it regarded the judges, it must have been treated with contempt, or prosecuted as a libel. He had been a member of the committee appointed to inquire into the economy of Cold Bath-fields prison, and he would confidently assert, that the moment the least remonstrance was made on the part of the prisoners, the strictest investigation was set on foot by government, and immediate relief, if necessary, afforded. He could not but think that governor Aris had been harshly treated in some speeches made in that House; for no in-

Digitized by Google

dividual had complained of oppression, except some of the mutineers.—Had the hon. baronet simply proposed the motion, he would not have moved any amendment, but as the hon. baronet had coupled it with a speech containing the strongest censure, he thought the House should express its decided opinion as to the conduct of the late ministers, to whom the country was, in his opinion, indebted for its salvation. He would, by way of amendment, accordingly propose, that all the words, after the word "that," should be omitted; and that in the room of them should be inserted the words, "the thanks of this House be given to his majesty's late ministers, for their wise and salutary conduct throughout the late war, by which they have maintained the national honour, and preserved the constitution."

The *Speaker* said, that such an amendment was certainly consistent with the forms of parliament, but was extremely unusual.

Mr. *Pitt* said, he would not offer one word on the original motion, but he hoped he might be allowed to suggest, that the amendment proposed by his noble friend, though within the letter of the order of the House, was certainly against the general course of proceeding; and therefore it appeared to him better not to proceed on the amendment. The House had met with a vague and imperfect notice of some motion to be levelled against the late administration, but with no knowledge of the particular points of that motion, which manifested, as he thought, a want of that accommodation which the House at least might have expected. But his noble friend would recollect, that as to the amendment, there had been no notice whatever; it it would therefore be an unusual course to pursue the amendment which his noble friend was inclined to propose; he hoped therefore, for the sake of the House, and of those to whom the amendment related, that he would not now bring it forward.

Lord *Belgrave* said, he should not have moved the amendment, had it not been for the speech of the hon. baronet; but after such a violent speech, it was necessary for him, in a manly manner, to express his opinion. He would, however, withdraw the amendment.

Mr. *Ellison* said, he was convinced the House was not to be led astray by "sound and fury signifying nothing." No fact had been brought forward in support of the motion which could induce a grand jury to put a man on his trial. He had heard much of Bastiles and Cold Bathfields, but he could not discover that any abuse of power existed. The motion appeared to him to be more directed against the majority of that House than against ministers; but he had always understood that the majority ought to govern the minority. The motion was brought forward at the very moment of peace, when, whilst the hon. baronet was asserting the country to be ruined, the people were displaying the greatest confidence in its resources.

Mr. *Bouverie* expressed his approbation of the motion. During the late contest much had been promised, but little had been performed. It was the indisputable right of the public to inquire how their affairs had been conducted during a contest in which so much blood and treasure had been expended, and it was the object of the motion to institute such an inquiry. If on the result of this inquiry ministers should appear to have acted for the public good, they would, no doubt, receive a proper tribute of approbation; and if the contrary should turn out to be the case, it was but just that they should meet the punishment they deserved.

Sir *R. Buxton* opposed the motion. He thought that, instead of gaining nothing by the war, we had gained our object. He admitted that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act was in some degree an infringement of the liberty of the subject; but the question was, whether that liberty was not to give way for a time to the safety of the country? There never was a war accompanied by rebellion, in which so few persons had suffered. It was surely better to pass a few temporary acts as a preventive, than to bring a number of persons to condign punishment.

Mr. *Alexander* said, that the speech of the hon. baronet was a charge of unqualified corruption on the parliament, and on the late ministers as the agents of that corruption. Nothing had been thrown out against those ministers which did not embrace the legislature and the government, and which did not equally tend to cast contempt upon all those persons by whom the government must be administered.

Sir *W. Elford* said, he had attended to the speech of the hon. baronet, and not one syllable in it appeared to him to apply to the late administration: the strictures were

Digitized by Google

all censures on the parliament, for enacting those laws of which the hon. baronet had complained, and for supporting the war, and the other measures of that administration; and the latter part of his speech was a gross libel on the late Irish parliament, and a tender apology for the Irish rebels. He was so fully convinced of the merits of those who were the objects of the motion, that he wished the forms of the House would admit of the motion of thanks proposed by the noble lord being now made. He had long thought, that considering the unparalleled obligations which this country owed to his majesty's late ministers, some active proof of its gratitude ought long ago to have been manifested. When he saw those right hon. gentlemen retiring from office, not with what used to be called emphatically ministerial fortunes, not with that independence which their great talents would have procured for them, had they been exercised in any other way than in the service of their country, he should ever consider it as an eternal disgrace to the country, and to the House in particular, that no one had, before this time, moved an humble address to his majesty, to implore him to bestow some signal mark of his royal bounty on those gentlemen, which that House would make good.

The House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Sir Francis Burdett - Mr. Alderman Combe	39
Noes	The Earl Temple - - Sir William Elford -	246

So it passed in the negative. Lord Belgrave then gave notice of his intention to bring forward, after the recess, a motion of thanks to the late administration.

Debate in the Commons on the Militia Bill.] Mr. Secretary *Yorke* said, he rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to amend and consolidate the militia laws, and to augment the number of the militia. His majesty's ministers had thought it necessary, at the conclusion of the definitive treaty, to pay every attention to the defensive system of the country. He entirely agreed with what had been observed on a late occasion, that peace was to be preserved by a mixture of conciliation and firmness. No principle could be more wise than this; but the benefit of it could only be derived from placing the country in a proper posture of defence. This was never more necessary than at present, when our nearest and most formidable neighbour had received a considerable accession of power, and when the principle of her government was essentially military. With these views, it was the intention of his majesty's confidential servants in the first place to put the navy in a good state; the establishment would not only be conducted with the strictest economy, but kept up in the very best manner. He was perfectly sure there was the same disposition in ministers to turn their attention to the ordnance. With respect to the army, it stood higher now than at any former period of the war. He was persuaded that every thing which could be done in that branch of the service was to be expected from the illustrious prince at the head of that department. It always appeared to him, however, that it was impossible to come to any definitive arrangement with respect to the army on a peace establishment, till the number and organization of the militia was concluded upon. This country was assailable in many points; and it was impossible to maintain a regular army equivalent to the defence of those points, without an enormous expense. It was therefore thought expedient, upon constitutional grounds, and those of economy, to propose an increase of the militia. The points to which he wished to call the attention of the House were, the formation of the militia laws, and the augmentation of the number of the militia. With respect to the former, he wished to take, as his basis, the act of the 26th of his present majesty; and as, since that period, not less than twelve acts had been passed relative to the militia of England, and five for Scotland, it was his intention to propose the consolidation of these laws, with such amendments as should appear necessary. With respect to the augmentation of the militia, it appeared to him never to have been sufficient in point of number. In the American war it was found necessary to augment the militia, then consisting of 32,000 men, by an additional 10,000. During the present war, in 1794, it was found necessary to augment the militia in the same way; afterwards, when the danger of the country increased, the militia was again considerably augmented, the whole amounting to 90,000 men. Every gentleman must see that to have recourse, on the emergency of the moment, to the measure of increasing the militia, must inter-

Digitized by Google

fere with the regular service; while that increase could not, at such a moment, be effected without a considerable expense, and the ultimate effect of the measure would be much weakened. It appeared to him, therefore that the defence of the country ought to be taken upon a system of peace, leaving as little as possible to the emergency of the moment. He thought, that from the extent of the island of Great Britain, and the number of points which required to be defended, making every allowance for the co-operation of the navy, this powerful island ought to be able to put under arms, at the commencement of a war, for the purpose of defence, 100,000 men. He thought also, that we ought to be able, at such a moment, to lay our hands on 70,000 militia. In the northern part of the island, it was his intention to propose, that there should be a militia of from 10,000 to 12,000 men. It would be observed, that Scotland had, till of late years, produced no militia, though she had sent forth many hardy and excellent soldiers. It became a question, whether it would be most advisable to enrol the whole of the 60,000 men, of which it was proposed the militia should consist in England, at once, or to enrol only a part, and to enable his majesty to enrol the remainder in the hour of danger. The greatest advantages would result to the country from thus having 70,000 men with arms in their hands, ready in the moment of danger; and the expense would be comparatively small; as, from the best calculation he could make, it would not amount to more than £230,000*l.* for the militia of England, including the whole expense of officers and men. This expense, would, however, be lessened, if 40,000 men were raised in England, and 9,000 in Scotland; and his majesty was empowered to raise, by proclamation, the remaining 20,000 in England, and 3,000 in Scotland, making a communication of the circumstance to parliament. By these means, the militia would be much better filled up than it could possibly be by raising a great number on the emergency of the moment. With respect to the amendments that he intended to propose in the existing regulations, they would embrace the following objects: the powers of lieutenants—the specified quota—the mode of inrolment—substitutes—the organization of the regiments—the formation of the regimental staff—the training, exercising, and embodying of them. He should state the general outline. With respect to the powers of the lieutenants, they would remain the same. With respect to the specified quota, he proposed that one-third should be added to the number of those to be furnished by each county. He had endeavoured to procure accurate information from the returns made by the different counties of the relative proportion which ought to be furnished by each; but he had found those returns so inaccurate, as to be wholly useless for the purpose for which he wanted them. He should therefore propose, that the 40,000 men should be raised according to the old proportion for a limited time. The privy council would then be able to obtain correct and accurate returns, and might upon those data ascertain a quota which might remain for ten years: at the end of that period a new apportionment to take place. The House would see that this was only enforcing the original plan. With respect to the mode of enrollment, he intended to propose some material alterations. The first was, that no man should be enrolled without being examined by a surgeon: it was well known, that men were frequently enrolled who were actually unfit for service: there would be therefore a great saving, if, previous to enrollment, they were examined by the assistant surgeon of the regiment, or, if he was not near the spot, by some other surgeon of competent skill. The next regulation that he intended to propose was, that the men enrolled should be divided into classes; that in one class should be placed those who were unmarried, and under 30 years of age; in another, those who were married, but had no children; in another, those with one child: and so on; by this means, as all the classes need not be called out together, recourse might be had, in the first instance, to the youngest men, and those with the smallest families. With respect to substitutes, they should be taken from those who resided in the same county as those for whom they served. As to the organization of the regiments, each company should have a captain, and that field-officers should not have companies. With respect to the formation of the regimental staff, there should not be a paymaster to any corps which consisted of less than three companies; his object was, to prevent the great expense which arose, at present, from small corps having as large a staff as those consisting of much greater numbers. He also intended to

Digitized by Google

propose, that there should not be a surgeon to any corps consisting of less than two companies, and that no person should be a surgeon to any corps of militia, until his skill had stood the test of an examination before competent judges; he proposed also, that they should be placed on the same footing as surgeons of infantry in the army. As to the non-commissioned officers, it was his intention to adhere to the 26th of his majesty, with respect to their number, being one serjeant and one corporal for every 30 men. But it was his intention to propose, that the serjeants, corporals, and drummers should be bound to reside near the place where the arms of the regiment were deposited; and that they should be under the care of the adjutant. It was intended that they should obtain a perfect knowledge of the exercise; by which means the men, when called out, would be easily taught, in the prescribed time during which they were to be out: whilst, if the serjeants and corporals were deficient in skill, when the men were called out to exercise, it was evident that a great delay must take place in the latter obtaining a knowledge of their exercise. He should propose also, that the pay of the serjeants, corporals, and drummers should be increased and made very near that of the same description of persons in the army: he should also propose, that if any non-commmissioned officer was absent with the leave of his officer, he should receive his former rate of pay; if he was absent without leave, it would, of course, be forfeited. With respect to training and exercising, he intended to propose, that, instead of exercising two-thirds for 28 days, the whole should be exercised for 21 days. The expence of exercising the whole for 21 days, would be the same as exercising two-thirds for 28 days, and the former period would be sufficient for the purpose. When the supplementary militia were called out, 20 days was found sufficient to teach them their exercise, and in 21 days the militia would at least learn how to prime and load, and fire, and to march without falling down. As to the embodying, he proposed that the same power should be given to his majesty of sending the militia to any part of Great Britain as at present. It had been suggested that they might be suffered to go out of the kingdom, but he should not make any such proposition. He should confine himself to what had been before the practice, leaving the other consideration to the exigency of the moment. He had every reason to believe, that our brethren in the northern part of the kingdom were now perfectly satisfied with the mode of raising the militia, and that they would most readily, whenever called upon for that purpose, march to any part of Great Britain. He wished, however, to propose, that in case his majesty should not think it necessary to embody the whole, he should be empowered to call out any part of the militia, and to distribute them as he should think necessary. He had stated, that it was proposed to augment the militia of England to 60,000, and that of Scotland to 12,000, making altogether 72,000. He concluded by moving for leave to bring in a bill, "to amend the laws relating to the Militia in England, and for augmenting the Militia."

Mr. *Sheridan* said:—I return the right hon. gentleman my thanks for the laudable pains he has taken in this business, and entirely concur in the greatest part of what he has proposed. It will, no doubt, be pleasing to behold every possible reduction made which circumstances will admit of; but great attention must be paid to our position, now that we are under the painful necessity of measuring the greatly augmented strength of our formidable rival. When I reflect on the late important accession to the power of our neighbour, divesting myself of any thing suspicious or mistrustful, I cannot but rejoice in the representation made us by the right hon. gentleman, of the present state of the militia; for I could not have viewed, without regret, the incroachment which, from time to time, threatened to destroy that most excellent system of defence. I entirely approve of the plan for consolidating the laws; and when it shall once be established, I hope it will not be broken in upon, as it has been during this war, for momentary expedition; and that gentlemen who have spent their lives in training, forming, and acquiring the love and attachment of their men, may not find themselves, on a sudden turned into drill-serjeants.

Leave was given. The bill was afterwards brought in, and passed without opposition.

Debate in the Commons on the Bank Restriction Continuance Bill.] April 9. Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said:—Sir, I rise to move for leave to bring in a bill to con-

Digitized by Google

tinue, for a time to be limited, the Restrictions on Payments in Cash by the Bank of England. I am aware, that it is impossible to submit, without explanation, a motion which is to have the effect of imposing any restraint with regard to the ordinary functions of such an establishment as the Bank; but I am convinced, that the measure cannot furnish a pretence to the most timid man in the House, to suppose the Bank does not possess within itself the most ample means of satisfying the full extent of the demands which may be made upon it, by the payment of its notes in specie. Sir, I was asked on a former day, whether I had any intention of moving for a preliminary inquiry; I said I had not; and the ground upon which I so said was, that I did not conceive the measure I had to propose was one which called for such a proceeding. In 1797, when this House was called upon to confirm the order of council imposing a restriction on the payments of the Bank, a committee was appointed for purposes far different from what are rendered necessary by the present shape in which the measure is brought forward. The object of that committee was to inquire into the solvency of the Bank, and into the existence and causes of the necessity which had produced the order of council; but the grounds on which I rest the present proposition are notorious. It cannot be necessary for me to inform the House, that the rate of exchange between this country and foreign parts is disadvantageous to ourselves—that the export trade has been for some months at a stand, that while the rate of exchange is disadvantageous to us, an augmentation of the circulating cash would create a trade highly injurious to the commerce of this country. For several months past there has been a trade carrying on for purchase of guineas with a view to exportation. It is on these grounds, that I submit to the House the expediency of continuing the restriction with regard to the cash payments of the Bank. There is another consideration that presses strongly on my mind. It is, that the entire command which we have experienced for some time past over all foreign markets, cannot be expected to continue in the same degree. Competition must exist; and it is important that, at the period of commencing that competition, every facility should be given to the merchants of this country. By continuing the restriction on the Bank for some time longer, the accommodation afforded to merchants by the Bank, with respect to discount, will be continued. In addition to these reasons the House will reflect upon the inconvenience which would unavoidably result from letting loose such a proportion of the coin of the country as would be circulated by taking off the restriction. I am not aware of any inconvenience that can possibly arise from continuing it. During three or four years of difficulty, the credit of the Bank has undergone no diminution. Bank notes have been every where received chearfully and readily; and there are two circumstances on which the House will be disposed to lay particular stress: at the time when it was thought expedient to increase the circulating medium, and the Bank were allowed by act of parliament to call in the notes of 1*l.* and 2*l.* and pay them in specie, notes to the amount of 800,000*l.* were called in, and the individuals holding them were entitled to payment in cash; but of that sum, upwards of 400,000*l.* was received in paper in preference to money. A similar proof was given last year of the confidence reposed by the public in the credit and stability of the Bank. I am entitled from these two circumstances to state, that there can be no just cause to doubt the credit of the Bank; and that to continue the restriction will rather have a tendency to raise, than to depress it. I know that there is a diversity of opinion with respect to the mode in which the Bank ought to be permitted to renew its money payments. Some are desirous that the Bank should pay in cash for notes of small denomination; but till there is an abundant supply of cash by opening the Bank entirely, it is extremely convenient to afford circulation to 1*l.* and 2*l.* notes; by the payment of them in specie, a general anxiety would be introduced of obtaining cash at the Bank: notes of 1000*l.* and 500*l.* would be changed for notes of 1*l.* and 2*l.* in order that they might be immediately changed again for cash. If a restraint was to be imposed with respect to the number of notes of small denomination, they would be driven out of circulation altogether; and there would be no small notes but those issued by bankers. I would ask the House, whether it would be convenient to have such notes only through the medium of country bankers? I mean not to throw the slightest discredit on that class, but only to infer, that it would not be an

Digitized by Google

act of prudence for the House to withhold from the Bank the right of issuing small notes, in order that it might be exclusively enjoyed by country bankers. It is not necessary for me to go more at large into the grounds of the measure I propose. It will be prudent to wait till we are enabled to judge of the effects of the peace —till our commercial relations are formed on the continent—till we know what are the political and commercial relations in which different countries stand with reference to each other, before we take a step, which, if it should turn out to be hastily taken, would be productive of inconvenience. I therefore, Sir, conclude by moving, "That the different acts of parliament by which that restriction had been enforced from time to time, for the last four years, be read." Which being done *pro formâ*, he moved, "That leave be given to bring in a bill to continue, for a time to be limited, the Restrictions contained in the said acts, on the Payment in Cash by the Bank."

Mr. *Jones* said, it was now five years since this measure was first adopted, and whatever reason there might have been at that period for sanctioning it, no reason was shown now for prolonging it. The very mention of it was a word of terror. He knew the effect it would have on the whole kingdom; Englishmen had feelings, and preferred the king's picture to assignats. Guineas ought to supersede the necessity of that kind of necromancy, a paper currency. He did not suppose that the Bank was unable to meet the claims upon it; but if the Bank was solvent, he desired some other reasons than those urged by the chancellor of the exchequer. If no other reasons were urged, he must conclude, that there existed some mystery in the matter, which ministers either could not or would not disclose. When he was desirous, some time ago, of ascertaining what were the profits of the directors, he was told they had none; how that could be reconciled with the triumphal accounts of their increasing wealth as a corporate body, was a solecism that he could by no means reconcile to his understanding. He could not bear to hear these inconsistencies without entertaining suspicions. Since this restriction had taken place, the forgeries of bank-notes had increased to such an alarming extent, as to require no less than seventy clerks to be employed in merely detecting them; and, within this very year, between thirty and forty persons had been executed for the crime. If this forging trade was therefore to be created, or rather extended by this law, he had more than a volume of argument against it. But it had become fashionable to call this paper currency "a circulating medium," the ingenious and wise substitute for current coin. He desired any person acquainted with the circumstances of the day, to reflect what must be the effect of this circulating medium. By the extent of its forgeries, no individual would be safe in negotiating with the Bank, if out of 20 or 30 two or one pound notes, three or four happened to be counterfeit. If the holder carried them to the Bank, there he would obtain no redress. Foreigners, as well as Englishmen, were hurt at this shutting of the Bank, and the injury it would occasion to the confidence between merchants was not to be calculated. It was a measure fraught with infinite ill. The swarm of country banks, which, like locusts, spread all over the kingdom, to the number of 458, were fit subject for taxation.

Sir *R. Peel* said, that in addition to the circumstance of foreign relations, which the hon. gentleman stated to be the sole reason why the Bank should withhold the payment of her specie just now, there were other causes which powerfully proved the necessity of it. The course of exchange was at this moment against us all over Europe. Again, since the war commenced, the trade of the country had increased threefold, and no resource of art or nature could equalize our bullion with it. The wealth of the nation he might estimate at 300 millions; and there was no possibility, as indeed there was no necessity, for having a cash currency to an equal amount; besides the impossibility there would also be the inconvenience, and the loss attending, whilst, as is the case at present, foreign gold is of so much more value than British. Upon the fullest consideration of the subject, seeing that no injury was done to the community, that none was heard of, that no petitions had appeared against it, that the credit of the Bank, instead of being diminished, had increased, he must support the motion. It was the continuation of a measure wisely and well imagined, and executed by the late administration.

General *Gascoyne*, in defence of the measure, stated that, so far from its having a tendency to shake the credit of the

§

Digitized by Google

Bank, it increased and protected it; in Liverpool, bank paper was preferred to cash, and its small notes taken there rather than specie. When the country banks in Lancaster had failed for about two millions of money, the public in that quarter naturally looked to the Bank of England, and their confidence had not only not been abused, but had become so great, that in exchanging a Bank of England note of 100*l.* 200*l.* or 500*l.* when the question was put, whether the party would have cash or small notes, they generally preferred the latter; and to such an extent had this confidence prevailed, that there was not now a country bank within forty miles of that town.

Dr. *Laurence* said, the hon. gentleman had brought it forward as an argument against this measure, that several persons had forfeited their lives for forging Bank-notes; but had they never heard of persons being hanged for counterfeiting the coin of the kingdom? The argument was the same in one case as in the other. He confessed he could not agree altogether with the argument used by the hon. baronet, as he thought it went beyond the intention of the present measure. The restriction did not affect the credit of the Bank; but was imposed to prevent the injurious consequences of a general alarm, and to provide against the possibility of any failure in the immediate resources of the Bank, to answer the extraordinary demands in consequence of that alarm. The restriction arose from parliament, and not from the Bank. The question was, whether this restriction ought now to be continued? The argument of the hon. baronet, that the trading interest of the country required an extensive paper circulation, would go to an unlimited continuance of this restriction. To this he could never agree; but when it was considered, that our export trade during the interval between the preliminary and the definitive treaty had been unfavourable, and that foreigners possessed large sums of money in this country, together with other circumstances, it would be rash to take off the restriction at the present moment. He wished, however, that they should reserve to themselves the power of taking off the restriction from time to time as circumstances might arise to justify such a measure.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that notwithstanding all he had heard, his original opinion remained unaltered. He would, however, now confine his objections to the mode of renewing the restriction; being satisfied that, though the restriction itself was an evil, it was an evil not suddenly to be remedied. Though he thought the renewal of cash payments extremely desirable, he was averse to precipitating it; and he would continue the restriction as likely to be attended with less mischief. But he was extremely unwilling that it should be continued without a committee, to inquire into the causes which rendered such a measure necessary, and to record them on the Journals, for the satisfaction of the House and the country. He agreed with the learned doctor, that the state of the exchange was a bad rule to go by, as it was liable to much abuse. It was what some gentlemen called the substantial trade of the country, but what he called mere speculation. He would allow the restriction to continue in force until six weeks after the commencement of the next session; but in the mean time, he wished to give the Bank a power to be used at its discretion, if a favourable change of circumstances should occur in the course of the summer, to open the payment in part, and put the country, as far as might be, on its proper footing. If any other war should arise, the country would lament the day when the restriction was imposed. He would not say that the credit of the Bank was impaired by it; but it had introduced a present vice into our money dealings, and would hereafter be attended with much evil.

Mr. *Manning*, in answer to the suggestion, that there ought to be a committee of inquiry now as well as at the time when the restriction was first laid on, observed, that there was this material difference between the cases; the restriction now moved for was only to have effect for a few months; whereas that originally imposed in 1797, was for the whole duration of the war, had it lasted half a century. As to the forgeries on the Bank, he utterly denied that they were to the extent represented.

Mr. *Boyd* wished to see an account of the state of the debts of the Bank, and its assets. These could be productive of no inconvenience to that body. It was a question, whether the restriction of cash payments had not increased the circulating medium more than was first intended, but whatever his private opinion might be, he would not now oppose the measure.

Leave was given to bring in the bill.

Digitized by Google

April 21. The bill being committed,

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, he should now state the grounds on which he should propose to fill up the blanks, specifying the duration of this bill and the continuance of the restriction, with "the 1st of March, 1803." It was stated by him the other day, that, from the new situation in which this country would be placed on the return of peace, it was advisable that the restriction of the money payments of the Bank should continue. It was not in consequence of any doubt or apprehension, or even reluctance of the Bank, but solely on the ground of political expediency, arising out of the situation of this country, with reference to its export trade, the course of exchange, and the commercial relations of foreign nations to each other, that this measure was proposed. On the solidity of the Bank, there was now no question. On the disposition of the Bank to pay in specie, he was also entitled to entertain no doubt, since the Bank had manifested a readiness to do so. It was, however, thought necessary to continue this restriction for a while. As to the necessity of inquiring into the causes of such necessity, and of its being founded on the report of a committee, he had to observe, that, upon the inconvenience of such a course of proceeding, much might be said; but besides the inconvenience, he doubted the practicability of that course; for if a committee were appointed, it would embrace such a train of examination as could not be gone over in any reasonable time. The only point upon which there appeared to be a question was, the duration of the measure; and this he thought should be governed by the probable end of the causes which produced it. Our export trade had been long, as it were, at a stand; we might entertain a reasonable expectation that in a short time it would find its proper channel; so that afterwards we might feel the effect of an advantageous export trade, the full advantages of which, however, we could not expect for ten or twelve months. Nor could we, in much less time, expect to have the full benefit of those other changes which he looked for in the course of exchange, &c. nor could those commercial relations of foreign states properly find their level in a much shorter time; so that, under all the circumstances, it did not appear to him unwise to adopt that time for the continuance of the restriction. He wished it to be understood, that this restriction was continued on the ground of political expediency, a measure judged of by the House of Commons, not by the Bank of England. Viewing this as a political measure, he would say it was fit that the House should determine how long this restriction should continue, and not put it in the power of the Bank to resume its money payments at its own will, and without any legislative limitation. He had nothing more to do at present than to propose that this blank be filled up with the words, "the 1st day of March 1803."

Mr. *Tierney* said, that for the sake of appearances, if for nothing else, it was necessary that the Bank should resume its payments as soon as possible. The chancellor of the exchequer had argued, that this was entirely a measure of a political nature: he could not, however, admire this policy. The two former committees had judged it expedient; but it was agreed that it ought to cease a month after the conclusion of peace. A month had now elapsed, and it was moved still to continue the restriction, without a single substantial reason assigned. He wished the right hon. gentleman would show how the restriction on the Bank would operate as a remedy for the dangers apprehended, or how it would not rather have a contrary effect. It appeared strange, that peace and war were equally an argument for continuing the restriction. Inconveniences might arise from suddenly resuming cash payments; but much more was to be dreaded from the minister thus interfering with the usual payments of the Bank, especially in such a peremptory manner. He contended, that the operation of the exchange would be felt sooner than March. He did not mean even to give the slightest hint against the credit of the Bank, or the wisdom of those who conducted it; but he wished, for the sake of our credit, that its payments should be resumed as quickly as possible. Some might privately think it desirable that the Bank should never commence its payments again; but no Englishman would venture publicly to express such a wish. He therefore thought a clause should be introduced into the bill, to give the directors a discretionary power of resuming cash payments.

The motion was agreed to. The bill passed its other stages without opposition.

Debate in the Commons on the Imports and Exports Duties Bill.] April 27. On

Digitized by Google

the order of the day for going into a committee of the whole House, upon the bill "for granting to his majesty certain duties on goods imported or exported, and on tonnage of ships and vessels,"

General *Gascoyne* objected to the continuance of these duties, as a system of impost which would be productive of serious consequences to the trade of this country. In the first instance, the duties under this bill, oppressive as they would be to Great Britain, would be still more so when it was known that they were not to extend to Ireland, as the Irish merchant would have a bonus decidedly superior to the English one. Why an exemption so partial should take place, he was at a loss to conceive; but certainly it was one not stipulated for under the act of union, nor was it one which could be nominally or virtually deduced from that act; but the immediate consequence of it would be, to enable the Irish merchant considerably to undersell the English one; for, under its operation, a merchant at Cork would be able to undersell a merchant in London, in the article of coffee alone, 8*s.* in the hundred weight. The shipping trade of England stood in need of protection and encouragement; but, under this act, it would be depressed. At this moment there were four foreign for one British vessel employed in the imports and exports of this country; and from this circumstance, a mischief against which we should most cautiously guard, and which had obtained through the war, would by this act be considerably promoted; namely, the increase and improvement of foreign seamen, by their being employed in the trade of this country. There were many articles of considerable import and consumption in this country, the imposts on which under this bill would be greater than the freight; the article of tallow, for instance: on the other hand, there were many articles of export which would be materially damped by this impost; and one in particular, namely, rock salt. This trade would be most considerably injured by the bill; and of the shipping belonging to Liverpool, thirty out of every hundred were now lying idle. Surely it would have been but decorous to the mercantile interests to have gone into a committee for the purpose of inquiring into the state of British shipping before a measure of such magnitude was perpetuated. Upon the shipping trade of this country it would operate as a double impost; for it would not only fall upon their tonnage in imports and exports, but upon the importation of the raw materials of which they are made. Now that war had ceased, and we were once more to enter into commercial emulation with the other nations of Europe, surely our trade should not be shackled with imposts that it was so ill able to bear!

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that no principle could be more just than that those who had gained by the burthens of the nation, should also bear a proportion of them; and it could not be denied, that the commercial world had been gainers by the war. So great security had been given to trade during the war, that only a moderate insurance was required; and the convoy duty became at last a direct tax on trade, and it was cheerfully borne. The question then was, whether circumstances had so changed as to render it expedient to remove this tax? If such a change could not be proved to have taken place, it was surely improper to take it off when so great an expenditure was to be provided for. No objection had formerly been made to this tax, when imposed during the war in the shape of convoy duty: no objection could be made to it, as, during its operation, trade, instead of declining, had wonderfully increased. From the returns made last session, it appeared, that, on an average of six years preceding 1793, our imports had amounted to 190,000,000*l.* per annum; whereas in 1801 they amounted to 240,000,000*l.* Our exports taken at the same periods had increased from 6 to 17,000,000*l.*; the increase in number of our ships amounted to 2,798, and the increase of tonnage to 365,000. During this increase, the present tax operated, and yet it still continued up to 1801. It then remained to be considered, whether our export and import trade was likely to be diminished by this duty. Different opinions might be entertained about the future state of our trade; but, for his own part, he was convinced that the footing gained by the commerce of Great Britain was so solid, that it could not fail to maintain its ground for a long course of years. The indisputable superiority of our manufactures, the greatness of our capital, the credit we gave, and the good faith we observed, must prevent any power in the universe from entering into a competition with us. With regard to that nation to which our jealousies and apprehensions were particularly directed, the difficulty lately ex-

Digitized by Google

perienced to procure ships for a most important expedition, was a proof that she could not, for many years to come, enter into a competition with us.—But the hon. gentleman expressed great dissatisfaction on account of the indulgencies shown to Ireland; and thought that this exemption in favour of Ireland would operate to the disadvantage of Great Britain. But there was a great dissimilarity between the two countries at present. Would to God they were both alike! he hoped the time was approaching when there would be an end of that dissimilarity. There was, however, a circumstance to which he would call the attention of the House. He meant the state of the linen trade; and, as Ireland was not charged with import duties on the raw material, he thought it due to the manufacturers of Great Britain, that they should experience a similar advantage; but he would call on the hon. gentleman to say, whether Ireland had any material advantage beyond its due proportion? In the export of linen, flax, &c. the regulation which was applied to Ireland, was applied also to Great Britain. He was, indeed, unable to state a manufacture, or branch of trade, in which Ireland was benefited in any considerable degree to the disadvantage of Great Britain. The hon. gentleman said, the measure was an instance of unusual partiality; that this tax had continued, and was to be made to continue on Great Britain, while Ireland was free from it. But let not the hon. gentleman imagine it was intended at all events, and under all possible circumstances, to continue this duty exclusively on the trade of Great Britain. He wished the measure to be considered as a measure of experiment. If, upon trial, it should be found injurious to the trade of Great Britain, he would say, let it be abandoned altogether. If, on the contrary, it should be found beneficial, and if the trade of Ireland should increase, as he confidently trusted it would, then it would be proper, in his opinion, to try the same experiment on the trade of Ireland. He would therefore say, that this measure was an experimental measure, both to Great Britain and to Ireland:—experimental to Great Britain, as applying to its trade now, and at the same time waiting for that increase in the trade of Ireland, when it might be made applicable to that country. If Ireland continued as it was, then he should not think it proper to apply this measure to its trade; but if it advanced in trade, and approached to that of Great Britain, it ought to participate in the burthens necessarily imposed on that of Great Britain.—The hon. gentleman said, that there now was, and for some time had been a considerable disproportion of foreign instead of British ships employed in our trade. That was perfectly true, and it arose from this cause—the trade of this country had increased with such rapidity that it was impossible to supply its demands without calling in the aid of foreign ships; but did it follow from thence that British shipping was not to find employment? Did it follow, because, during the war, the extent of our trade was such that our own shipping was not enough for it, that therefore the trade would be carried on in foreign ships in preference to ours? By no means; nor was the fact of our having employed foreign shipping at all discouraging; on the contrary, it proved the vast increase of our trade. So that, instead of the comment of the hon. gentleman, that our shipping would decline, he thought it was good ground of confidence in an increasing trade, and still greater prosperity. The hon. gentleman had lamented the present stagnation in our export trade. This he admitted: from causes that were onerous to us, there certainly had been of late a stagnation in several parts of that trade; but it was to be remembered that, during the negotiation, our merchants followed a circuitous route, which occasioned much of this inconvenience, and they were under the necessity of doing so; but this afforded a good reason for apprehending that, as the course was now different, the effect would be different also.—He would not now state the terms on which relief was intended to be afforded to our merchants in respect to the operation of this duty, because that belonged properly to the committee; but he thought the regulations could not fail to be satisfactory. What he wished to be kept constantly in view was, that this was an experimental measure; and as far as the subjects of imports and exports were concerned, the House would recollect that notice had been already given of a measure to be proposed in the next session for consolidating the duties of customs, and then every article might again become the subject of discussion.

Sir *R. Peel* said, that the measure might be injurious in a way that was not immediately obvious. It would be re-

Digitized by Google

collected, that our commerce had flourished and been carried to a vast extent during the war, when it encountered no competition: a change had now taken place; a considerable debt had been incurred in consequence of that war, which necessarily imposed an additional expense on every article of manufacture, which must be charged upon the purchaser. We could now meet our competitors in foreign markets on the grounds of merit and cheapness only; and if the consumer could meet with cheaper articles he would, very probably prefer them. He trusted the House would consider well before they sanctioned a measure, the operation of which might be injurious to our own foreign trade. It had been observed, that the course of exchange was against us; and it could not be otherwise, unless we could send our goods at a cheaper rate to foreign markets. With respect to the convoy duty, he had highly approved of it at the time when it was imposed, but he did conceive that it would cease at the end of the war, and that other duties, if necessary, would then be imposed, more suitable to the circumstances of the country. His principal objection, however, was to the partial operation of the tax. It had been formerly laid down as a principle, that the advantages given to the manufactures of Ireland should be equally extended to those of this country. Some of the manufactures of Ireland had been nursed with peculiar care: the linen manufacture had thrown this country out of all competition, and the cotton manufacture of that country seemed likely to rival the article manufactured in Great Britain. He lamented that the right hon. gentleman who had framed the union had not been able to render that measure so complete as he wished, in consequence of circumstances which he could not control. Ireland possessed, however, at present, advantages which this country did not; and he thought there was a sufficient reason why the burdens of this country should also be burdens on that. A considerable injury might otherwise arise; and Ireland, having the advantages which she possessed, had no right to complain. He would venture to say, that 1,000*l.* employed in Ireland in the export trade, would produce greater returns than the same sum employed in the same way in this country. He was much mistaken if the present measure did not trench upon the 6th article of the Union. He did not deny that it might have been an object to better the condition of Ireland; but it certainly never could have been in contemplation to place England in a worse situation than it was before. There were reasons why the convoy duty should not extend to Ireland at the time it was imposed, as that country was then labouring under domestic troubles, and incapable of commercial exertion; but he trusted the House would maturely reflect before they sanctioned the present measure.

Mr. *Corry* said, that the trade of this country having flourished under the operation of this tax, he thought there was no ground of apprehension, that it would now suffer by its continuation. With regard to Ireland, he wished to say a few words on what was called the colony compact. By that act Great Britain granted to Ireland the privilege of trading to her colonies under certain conditions, which Ireland accepted. But, whatever that compact was, he contended that it was merged in the act of Union, by which there was a complete junction of the sovereignties of the two countries. The parliament of Ireland then became completely united with that of this country, and entered into a co-enjoyment and became jointly possessed of the sovereignty of these colonies. They were therefore no longer bound by the compact which the two parties had entered into, as, those two parties having become one, their rights were necessarily the same; and he trusted that it was impossible to give any interpretation to the act of Union, that would not admit the rights of Ireland to trade to the British colonies. The hon. baronet had referred to an article of the Union relative to the equal rights of both parties; but the article referred to, related wholly to the rights of trade; the present measure was a subject of taxation which was totally and entirely different. Let the article of the Union respecting taxation be referred to. What was the import of that article? It was to be lamented that the union between the two countries could not be entirely completed; but it unfortunately happened that their exchequers remained distinct, and consequently the taxation of the two countries. Ireland was neither able to bear the burdens of this country, nor was she called upon to do it. It was for the judgment of the

Digitized by Google

House to decide in what manner taxes should be imposed; but that it was necessary to extend the present tax to Ireland, he wholly denied; that it was expedient he could not allow.

Lord *Sheffield* said, that these duties, if laid only on this country, must operate as a bounty in favour of the shipping and manufactures of Ireland, and in disfavour of those of Great Britain. It had been urged that Scotland at the time of the union and since, had been indulged with particular exemptions; but they related only to internal consumption, and arose from the inferiority of climate. The exemptions now proposed affected external commerce, and went infinitely beyond what seemed to be intended. We were told that Ireland was not to be taxed in the same proportion as Great Britain, to which he entirely agreed; but taxes which operated as regulations or checks to external commerce, must be the same in both countries, otherwise the union might prove a ruinous bargain to Great Britain. The convoy tax could not be compared to that now proposed. It was only intended to exist during the war, when the trade of the world passed through this country, and no other shipping was safe. The case was now widely different; a great proportion of our shipping and seamen were discharged, and there never was a moment when it was more necessary to encourage them. He deeply regretted the dereliction which on so many occasions, took place in respect to that navigation system which had been the foundation of our safety, power, and commerce. He could not approve of the bill as an experimental measure; he was sure it would prove the worst of precedents.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that this might be considered either as a measure of commercial regulation, or of taxation. It would be recollected, that the system alluded to by the hon. baronet would only last twenty years; but, not to go so far as that period, there was no necessity for making any distinction between the two countries, so far as this could be considered as a commercial regulation. He could not see, however, that it was necessary to extend this tax to Ireland. Great Britain found it expedient, in consequence of the expenses incurred by the late war, to have recourse to a certain tax; and the chancellor of the exchequer chose that which he considered as the least productive of evil. But if the burdens of Ireland were not co-extensive with those of Great Britain, it was not just to call upon Ireland to adopt the same system of taxation. Ireland ought not to be called upon to contribute to the tax, if she could raise the supplies in a mode more convenient to herself. One great objection to the extension of this tax to Ireland was, that it would be inoperative. The duty would not apply to the trade between Great Britain and Ireland, but only to the foreign trade of Ireland, which was not above a ninth or tenth of the foreign trade of Great Britain. It would be in the power of the House to extend the tax to Ireland whenever they thought it expedient.

Mr. *Dent* said, it was true, the merchants had paid this tax cheerfully, but it was from a full understanding that it would be taken off upon the conclusion of peace. When the House were about to lay such a burthen upon our commerce, they ought to consider, that most of our manufactures were forbidden in France; and information had recently been received, that a ship laden with British manufactures had lately been obliged to leave one of the French ports. He believed, that France had suffered so much by the commercial treaty of 1786, that she was not willing to make another commercial treaty.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that it would have been impossible to have renewed with France the old commercial treaty that subsisted before the war. The many regulations which had been imposed in this country, particularly with regard to wine, must render it impossible that that treaty could be renewed in the same form. Besides, there were other objections to it of a decisive nature. That treaty could not be renewed without our giving up a system which he hoped never would be abandoned, he meant the alien laws. Another consequence of our renewing that treaty would be, that we must acknowledge the principles of the armed neutrality, at least as far as related to France. It was true, that our giving up that principle with regard to France was no reason for giving it up to other countries. Yet after the confederacy which had been formed against us this war, and the principles asserted by the powers composing that confederacy, he was of opinion that we ought to adhere to our old principles, and not to concede it to any power whatever.

Dr. *Laurence* said, that the arguments

Digitized by Google

which had been advanced to show, that Ireland ought to be exempted from this tax, appeared to him by no means conclusive; because this could not be considered merely as a measure of taxation; it certainly was a commercial regulation. He then entered into an examination of the effect which this tax would have upon our own trade, and contended that, in many instances, it would operate most disadvantageously. The tax would be more severely felt in this country, because there would be no such tax in other countries, and consequently it would add to the difficulties we should have to contend with before we could meet our rivals in foreign markets.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, it was undoubtedly true, that during the war the shipping of this country had been very considerably increased; but it should be recollected, that the war furnished employment for a great number of ships, particularly for the transport service, and consequently enabled the owners to bear this tax much better than they could in a time of peace. He was unwilling to propose any general deduction from the amount of the tax; but he wished to propose to reduce the duty in some cases, and to increase it in others, so as to make the produce the same.

The House then went into the Committee.

Copy of the Definitive Treaty of Peace.] April 29. Lord Hawkesbury presented, by his Majesty's command, the following Copy of the

DEFINITIVE TREATY of PEACE between his Britannic Majesty and the French Republic, his Catholic Majesty, the Batavian Republic; Signed at Amiens the 27th Day of March 1802.

His majesty the king of the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the first consul of the French Republic, in the name of the French people, being animated with an equal desire to put an end to the calamities of war, have laid the foundation of peace in the preliminary articles signed at London the 1st of October 1801 (ninth Vendemiaire, year ten:) And as by the fifteenth article of the said preliminaries it has been stipulated that plenipotentiaries should be named on each side, who should proceed to Amiens for the purpose of concluding a definitive treaty, in concert with the allies of the contracting powers: his majesty the king of the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland has named for his plenipotentiary the marquis Cornwallis, knight of the most illustrious order of the Garter, privy counsellor to his majesty, general of his armies, &c.; the first consul of the French republic, in the name of the French people, the citizen Joseph Buonaparté, counsellor of state; his majesty the king of Spain and of the Indies, and the government of the Batavian republic, have named for their plenipotentiaris, viz. his Catholic majesty, Don Joseph Nicolas de Azara, his counsellor of state, knight Great Cross of the order of Charles 3rd, his said majesty's ambassador extraordinary to the French republic, &c.; and the government of the Batavian republic, Roger John Schimmelpenninck, their ambassador extraordinary to the French republic; who, after having duly communicated to each other their full powers, which are transcribed at the end of the present treaty, have agreed upon the following Articles:—

ART. 1. There shall be peace, friendship, and good understanding, between his majesty the king of the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, his heirs and successors, on the one part; and the French republic his majesty the king of Spain, his heirs and successors, and the Batavian republic, on the other part. The contracting parties shall give the greatest attention to maintain, between themselves and their states, a perfect harmony, and without allowing on either side any kind of hostilities, by sea or by land, to be committed for any cause, or under any pretence whatsoever. They shall carefully avoid every thing which might hereafter affect the union happily re-established, and they shall not afford any assistance or protection, directly or indirectly, to those who should cause prejudice to any of them.

ART. 2. All the prisoners taken on either side, as well by land as by sea, and the hostages carried away or given during the war, and to this day, shall be restored without ransom in six weeks at latest, to be computed from the day of the exchange of the ratifications of the present treaty, and on paying the debts which they have contracted during their captivity. Each contracting party shall respectively discharge the advances which have been made by any of the contracting parties for the subsistence and maintenance of the prisoners in the country where they have been detained. For this purpose a commission shall be appointed by agreement, which shall be specially charged to ascertain and regulate the compensation which may be due to either of the contracting powers. The time and place where the commissioners, who shall be charged with the execution of this article, shall assemble, shall also be fixed upon by agreement; and the said commissioners shall take into account the expenses occasioned, not only by the prisoners of the respective nations, but also by the foreign troops, who, before they were made prisoners, were in the pay, or at the disposal, of any of the contracting parties.

ART. 3. His Britannic majesty restores to

Digitized by Google

the French republic and her allies, namely, his Catholic majesty and the Batavian republic, all the possessions and colonies which belonged to them respectively, and which had been occupied or conquered by the British forces in the course of the war, with the exception of the island of Trinidad, and the Dutch possessions in the island of Ceylon.

ART. 4. His Catholic majesty cedes and guarantees, in full right and sovereignty, to his Britannic majesty, the island of Trinidad.

ART. 5. The Batavian republic cedes and guarantees, in full right and sovereignty, to his Britannic majesty, all the possessions and establishments in the island of Ceylon, which belonged before the war, to the republic of the United Provinces, or to their East India company.

ART. 6. The Cape of Good Hope remains in full sovereignty to the Batavian republic, as it was before the war. The ships of every description belonging to the other contracting parties, shall have the right to put in there and to purchase such supplies as they may stand in need of as heretofore without paying any other duties than those to which the ships of the Batavian republic are subjected.

ART. 7. The territories and possessions of her most faithful majesty are maintained in their integrity, such as they were previous to the commencement of the war. Nevertheless, the limits of French and Portuguese Guiana shall be determined by the river Arawari, which falls into the ocean below the North Cape, near the isle Neuve and the island of Penitence, about a degree and one third of north latitude. These limits shall follow the course of the river Arawari, from that of its mouths which is at the greatest distance from the North Cape to its source, and thence in a direct line from its source to the river Branco towards the West. The northern bank of the river Arawari, from its mouth to its source, and the lands which are situated to the north of the line of the limits above fixed, shall consequently belong in full sovereignty to the French republic. The southern bank of the said river from its source, and all the lands to the southward of the said line of demarkation, shall belong to her most faithful majesty. The navigation of the river Arawari shall be common to both nations. The arrangements which have taken place between the courts of Madrid and of Lisbon, for the settlement of their frontiers in Europe, shall, however, be executed conformably to the treaty of Badajoz.

ART. 8. The territories, possessions, and rights of the Ottoman Porte, are hereby maintained in their integrity, such as they were previous to the war.

ART. 9. The republic of the Seven Islands is hereby acknowledged.

ART. 10. The islands of Malta, Gozo, and Comino, shall be restored to the order of St. John of Jerusalem, and shall be held by it upon the same conditions on which the order held them previous to the war, and under the following stipulations:

1. The knights of the order, whose langues shall continue to subsist after the exchange of the ratifications of the present treaty, are invited to return to Malta as soon as that exchange shall have taken place. They shall there form a general chapter, and shall proceed to the election of a grand master, to be chosen from amongst the natives of those nations which preserve langues, if no such election shall have been already made since the exchange of the ratifications of the preliminary articles of peace. It is understood, that an election which shall have been made subsequent to that period, shall alone be considered as valid to the exclusion of every other which shall have taken place at any time previous to the said period.

2. The governments of Great Britain and of the French republic, being desirous of placing the order of St. John and the island of Malta in a state of entire independence on each of those powers, do agree that there shall be henceforth no English nor French langues, and that no individual belonging to either of the said powers shall be admissible into the order.

3. A Maltese langue shall be established, to be supported out of the land revenues and commercial duties of the island. There shall be dignities with appointments, and an Auberge appropriated to this langue. No proofs of nobility shall be necessary for the admission of knights into the said langue. They shall be competent to hold every office, and to enjoy every privilege, in the like manner as the knights of the other langues. The municipal, revenue, civil, judicial, and other offices under the government of the island, shall be filled at least in the proportion of one-half by native inhabitants of Malta, Gozo, and Comino.

4. The forces of his Britannic majesty shall evacuate the island and its dependencies within three months after the exchange of the ratifications, or sooner if it can be done. At that period the island shall be delivered up to the order in the state in which it now is, provided that the grand master, or commissioners fully empowered, according to the statutes of the order, be upon the island to receive possession, and that the force to be furnished by his Sicilian majesty, as hereafter stipulated, be arrived there.

5. The garrison of the island shall, at all times, consist at least one half of native Maltese; and the order shall have the liberty of recruiting for the remainder of the garrison from the natives of those countries only that shall continue to possess Langues. The native Maltese troops shall be officered by Maltese; and the supreme command of the garrison, as well as the appointment of the officers shall be vested in the grand master of the order, and he shall not be at liberty to divest himself of it, even for a time, except in

Digitized by Google

favour of a knight of the order, and in consequence of the opinion of the council of the order.

6. The independence of the islands of Malta, Gozo, and Comino, as well as the present arrangement, shall be under the protection and guarantee of Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia, Spain, and Prussia.

7. The perpetual neutrality of the order, and of the island of Malta and its dependencies, is hereby declared.

8. The ports of Malta shall be open to the commerce and navigation of all nations who shall pay equal and moderate duties. These duties shall be applied to the support of the Maltese langue, in the manner specified in paragraph 3, to that of the civil and military establishments of the island, and to that of a Lazaretto open to all flags.

9. The Barbary states are excepted from the provisions of the two preceding paragraphs, until, by means of an arrangement to be made by the contracting parties, the system of hostility which subsists between the said Barbary states, the order of St. John, and the powers possessing langues, or taking part in the formation of them, shall be terminated.

10. The order shall be governed, both in spiritual and temporal matters by the same statutes that were in force at the time when the knights quitted the island, so far as the same shall not be derogated from by the present treaty.

11. The stipulations contained in paragraphs 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10, shall be converted into laws and perpetual statutes of the order, in the customary manner. And the grand master (or, if he should not be in the island at the time of its restitution to the order, his representative) as well as his successors, shall be bound to make oath to observe them punctually.

12. His Sicilian majesty shall be invited to furnish two thousand men, natives of his dominions, to serve as a garrison for the several fortresses upon the island. This force shall remain there for one year from the period of the restitution of the island to the knights; after the expiration of which term, if the order of St. John shall not, in the opinion of the guaranteeing powers, have raised a sufficient force to garrison the island and its dependencies, in the manner proposed in paragraph 5, the Neapolitan troops shall remain until they shall be relieved by another force judged to be sufficient by the said powers.

13. The several powers specified in paragraph 6, viz. Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia, Spain, and Prussia, shall be invited to accede to the present arrangement.

Art. 11. The French forces shall evacuate the kingdom of Naples, and the Roman territory. The English forces shall, in like manner, evacuate Porto Ferrajo, and generally all the ports and islands which they may occupy in the Mediterranean, or in the Adriatic.

Art. 12. The evacuations, cessions, and restitutions, stipulated for by the present treaty, except where otherwise expressly provided for, shall take place in Europe within one month, in the continent and seas of America and of Africa within three months, and in the continent and seas of Asia within six months after the ratification of the present definitive treaty.

Art. 13. In all the cases of restitution agreed upon by the present treaty, the fortifications shall be delivered up in the state in which they may have been at the time of the signature of the preliminary treaty; and all the works which shall have been constructed since the occupation shall remain untouched.

It is farther agreed, that in all the cases of cession stipulated, there shall be allowed to the inhabitants, of whatever condition or nation they may be, a term of three years to be computed from the notification of this present treaty, for the purpose of disposing of their property acquired and possessed either before or during the war, in which term of three years they may have the free exercise of their religion and enjoyment of their property.

The same privilege is granted in the countries restored to all those, whether inhabitants or others, who shall have made therein any establishments whatsoever during the time when those countries were in the possession of Great Britain.

With respect to the inhabitants of the countries restored or ceded, it is agreed that none of them shall be prosecuted, disturbed or molested in their persons or properties, under any pretext, on account of their conduct or political opinions, or of their attachment to any of the contracting powers, nor on any other account, except that of debts contracted to individuals, or on account of acts posterior to the present treaty.

Art. 14. All sequestrations imposed by any of the parties on the funded property, revenues, or debts, of whatever description, belonging to any of the contracting powers, or to their subjects or citizens, shall be taken off immediately after the signature of this definitive treaty. The decision of all claims brought forward by individuals, the subjects or citizens of any of the contracting powers respectively, against individuals subjects or citizens of any of the others, for rights, debts, property, or effects whatsoever, which, according to received usages, and the law of nations, ought to revive at the period of peace, shall be heard and decided before competent tribunals; and in all cases prompt and ample justice shall be administered in the countries where the claims are made.

Art. 15. The fisheries on the coast of Newfoundland, and of the adjacent islands, and of the gulph of St. Lawrence, are replaced on the same footing on which they were previous to the war. The French fishermen, and the inhabitants of St. Pierre, and Miquelon, shall have the privilege of cutting such wood as they

Digitized by Google

may stand in need of, in the bays of Fortune and Despair, for the space of one year from the date of the notification of the present treaty.

ART. 16. In order to prevent all causes of complaint and dispute which may arise on account of prizes which may have been made at sea, after the signature of the preliminary articles, it is reciprocally agreed that the vessels and effects which may have been taken in the British channel, and in the North sea, after the space of twelve days, to be computed from the exchange of the ratifications of the said preliminary articles, shall be restored on each side; that the term shall be one month from the British channel and the North seas, as far as the Canary islands, inclusively, whether in the ocean or in the mediterranean; two months from the said Canary islands as far as the equator; and lastly, five months in all other parts of the world, without any exception, or any more particular description of time or place.

ART. 17. The ambassadors, ministers, and other agents of the contracting powers shall enjoy respectively in the states of the said powers, the same rank, privileges, prerogatives, and immunities, which public agents of the same class enjoyed previous to the war.

ART. 18. The branch of the house of Nassau, which was established in the republic, formerly called the republic of the United provinces, and now the Batavian republic, having suffered losses there as well in private property as in consequence of the change of constitution adopted in that country, an adequate compensation shall be procured for the said branch of the House of Nassau for the said losses.

ART. 19. The present definitive treaty of peace is declared common to the sublime Ottoman Porte, the ally of his Britannic majesty, and the Sublime Porte shall be invited to transmit its act of accession thereto in the shortest delay possible.

ART. 20. It is agreed that the contracting parties shall, on requisitions made by them respectively, or by their ministers or persons or officers duly authorised to make the same, deliver up to justice persons accused of crimes of murder, forgery, or fraudulent bankruptcy, committed within the jurisdiction of the requiring party, provided that this shall be done only when the evidence of the criminality shall be so authenticated as that the laws of the country where the person so accused shall be found would justify his apprehension and commitment for trial, if the offence had been there committed. The expenses of such apprehension and delivery shall be borne and defrayed by those who make the requisition. It is understood that this article does not regard in any manner crimes of murder, forgery, or fraudulent bankruptcy, committed antecedently to the conclusion of this definitive treaty.

ART. 21. The contracting parties promise to observe sincerely and *bonâ fide* all the articles contained in the present treaty; and they will not suffer the same to be infringed, directly or indirectly, by their respective subjects or citizens, and the said contracting parties generally and reciprocally guarantee to each other all the stipulations of the present treaty.

ART. 22. The present treaty shall be ratified by the contracting parties in thirty days, or sooner if possible, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in due form at Paris.

In witness whereof, we the underwritten plenipotentiaries, have signed with our hands, and in virtue of our respective full powers, the present definitive treaty, and have caused our respective seals to be affixed thereto. Done at Amiens, the 27th day of March, 1802, the sixth Germinal, year Ten of the French Republic.

CORNWALLIS.	(L. S.)
JOSEPH BUONAPARTE.	(L. S.)
J. NICOLAS DE AZARA.	(L. S.)
R. J. SCHIMMELPENNINCK.	(L. S.)

Separate Article.—It is agreed, that the omission of some titles, which may have taken place in the present treaty, shall not be prejudicial to the powers or to the persons concerned.

It is farther agreed, that the English and French languages made use of in all the copies of the present treaty shall not form an example which may be alleged or quoted as a precedent, or in any manner prejudice the contracting powers whose languages have not been used; and that for the future what has been observed, and ought to be observed, with regard to, and on the part of powers who are in the practice and possession of giving and receiving copies of like treaties in any other language, shall be conformed with; the present treaty having, nevertheless, the same force and virtue as if the aforesaid practice had been therein observed.

In witness whereof, we, the underwritten plenipotentiaries of his Britannic majesty, of the French republic, of his Catholic majesty, and of the Batavian republic, have signed the present Separate Article, and have caused our respective seals to be affixed thereto. Done at Amiens the 27th day of March, 1802, the sixth Germinal, year Ten of the French Republic.

CORNWALLIS.	(L. S.)
JOSEPH BUONAPARTE.	(L. S.)
J. NICOLAS DE AZARA.	(L. S.)
R. J. SCHIMMELPENNINCK.	(L. S.)

Lord *Hawkesbury*, on moving "That the said Treaty do lie on the table, to be perused by the members of the House," said, it was the wish of ministers to adhere to the usage observed on former occasions of this kind, and as there

Digitized by Google

was no instance where any proceeding had been instituted respecting a definitive treaty, after a preliminary treaty, which had received the approbation of the House, it was not their intention to propose that any such proceeding should now take place. He was aware, however, that it was competent to every member to bring the subject under the consideration of the House, on the ground of a specific objection to any part of it, of its being inconsistent with the preliminaries, or of any change of circumstances which might have taken place from the time that these preliminaries were agreed upon, and to submit a regular motion for that purpose. There was, he believed, an intention to submit such a motion to the consideration of the House, and he assured the House, his majesty's ministers were ready to meet it, to explain the whole, or any part of their conduct, and to state fully, fairly, and explicitly, the reasons which induced them to advise his majesty to conclude the definitive treaty.—Mr. Windham said, he would, on Monday, shortly state the reasons which would induce him to move, that the definitive treaty be taken into consideration on a future day.—Lord Grenville gave a similar notice in the House of Peers.

Debate on Mr. Windham's Motion for appointing a day to consider the Definitive Treaty of Peace.] May 3. Mr. *Windham* said:—Sir, I do not rise to solicit the House to come now to any final decision upon the merits of the definitive treaty of peace, but simply to move a day for taking it into consideration. His majesty's ministers think that no discussion is necessary, the preliminaries having met with the approbation of the House, and they have declined to introduce any motion respecting it. Whether this be an invariable custom, or one that would be "more honoured in the breach than the observance," I shall not stay to inquire. If there be precedents that do not render any such proceeding necessary, they must be founded upon the presumption that, by its approbation of the preliminary treaty, the House has sanctioned the definitive. Now, I think that it is quite the contrary in the present case. I think that the question is completely open, and that there may be perfectly good grounds for giving a different judgment upon the definitive treaty, from that which the preliminaries have received. At the same time, however, that ministers have declared that they see no necessity for farther discussion, they have also expressed a wish, that, if any such be to take place, it may be a full and complete, not a partial discussion. If by this they mean that the subject should be taken up upon all its grounds, and with a full view of the subject in all its points, bearings, and relations, in that wish I heartily concur. If, on the contrary, by deprecating a partial discussion, it be meant that the whole discussion should take place on the same day; if it be meant to croud all the points of this comprehensive business into a single sitting, and without full information to assist the judgment in its inquiry into the merits of each, I cannot agree; because it cannot be done with justice to a question of so great magnitude. In the circumstances under which I now present myself, I am, *mutatis mutandis*, like a counsel in an opening speech, in which I am to touch on a variety of papers and matters, the complete knowledge of which can only be disclosed in the proofs produced in the progress of the trial: but whether ministers will give all these accounts and papers is what will make all the difference possible in the final discussion. This is a subject upon which I have already expressed my sentiments; and sorry should I be to have it supposed, that, if we were met to pass a final judgment upon it, I should touch so slightly as I mean now to do upon many points of moment, and express so feebly the deep anxiety and apprehensions which I entertain of the treaty, as of the grave digging for our greatness, and an abyss opening at our feet to swallow us up. The best order in which to consider this subject, will, I think, be under the four following heads: I shall first take the circumstances which did exist, but were not known in this country, previous to the preliminaries. Secondly, those points which took place in the interval between the preliminaries and the definitive treaty. Thirdly, the variation of certain points in the definitive from their state in the preliminaries; and, fourthly, those points in the definitive which do not exist in any shape in the preliminaries, yet may not be considered as a departure from them. As to the first class, namely, the circumstances which did exist, but were not known, before the preliminaries, there are three principal ones: 1, the cession of the isle of Elba; 2, the limit of French Guiana; and, 3,

Digitized by Google

the cession of Louisiana. The cession of the isle of Elba has been already mensioned; and when the necessary papers shall be laid before the House, it will be the proper time to enter into it fully. I shall now touch on the manner of the cession only, leaving it to the House to judge the value of the acquisition to the French as an excellent station, an important harbour, and an impregnable fortress. The argument by which our assent is sought to be obtained for this advantage given to the French is, the immensity of objects of equal if not greater value, which destroys its single importance; that is, we are told, why continue the war for the sake of the isle of Elba, when so many points of greater value have been surrendered? Without dwelling then on its value, I shall consider the manner, which is, in my mind, more important than the thing itself. There is in it such tricking, such chicanery, as requires constant explanation; and the more it is examined, the more odious is the light in which it appears. The House will recollect that, by the treaty of Luneville, by which a transfer was made of the duchy of Tuscany, it was expressly stipulated that Porto Ferrajo should remain as it was before, attached to the dukedom of Tuscany. Now, what do the French? they have recourse to that sort of calculation by which an algebraist would proceed to exterminate a quantity that he wished to to get rid of; they transfer it to another person, they leave it with the duke of Tuscany; but, as if they were playing a game of chess, they remove the duke and put a king in his place. They take a king of the house of Spain, and having placed him in the duke's stead, they negotiate with the court of Spain, that it shall not remain with Tuscany, but be transferred to France. This was not known at the time when the preliminaries were signed. It comes out then, that the real state of Porto Ferrajo was artfully concealed; that, instead of being a station in the hands of the duke of Tuscany, or against the French, it was to be transferred to France, to facilitate her attack upon Naples, or any other ally that we might have in that quarter in a future war. Surely nobody will say that these circumstances, if the thing stood single, are not such as put the case upon a new footing, and leave it a *res integra* open to discussion. —Now, Sir, passing over this, we proceed to the next point, which is much the same in manner, but greater in magnitude: I mean the boundary assigned to French Guiana. I shall consider it as the former, not so much with regard to its importance, as to the consequences attending it, which I contend were a gross breach of good faith. When the preliminaries were signed, we were given to understand by them, that the dominions of Portugal were to be maintained in their integrity. Therefore, when the treaty of Madrid came out, which violated them, there was a general outcry and alarm. We were told, that it would be given up. As for myself, I could not understand that the French would have made this excursion into the Portuguese territory, purely for the purpose of giving it up again. It seems, however, they did so, as his majesty's ministers take credit for making them give it up and take another. A few leagues of wilderness, in one place or another, are no great object. The question is, the command which it gives them of the Mississippi, and that they have as much by the one as by the other. Either boundary is equally a breach of faith; they should have gone to the treaty of Utrecht; for, to impose a new boundary upon us is equally a fraud as if they had retained the former. As to the treaty of Badajos, which has been referred to on this subject, there is no such paper before the House, and therefore I leave it out of my consideration. What I complain of is the fraudulent exchange. It has been said of a peace that it was only a change of war; the French mode of plain dealing may be perhaps a substitution of one fraud for another.—The next point in this rising climax of frauds is the cession of Louisiana. By this acquisition the French are established in a space as unbounded as the view it opens, whether North or South. What a present have we made in it to the Americans! We have placed a serpent at their feet, by which they will be ultimately devoured. We have put them in that state in which they must become willing slaves under the dominion of France. We all know something of human nature. We know that men detest the instrument less than the cause, and turn their resentment upon those whom they can make to feel it most. They will not of course hesitate between us and the French, and thus we shall eventually forfeit the friendship of America by the aggrandizement of the French in that quarter. As to the wealth which this establishment opens to them, it has no

Digitized by Google

limits but their will. On the continent of South America, there is no power that can resist them: there are the sources of the wealth of the world. But if gentlemen do not feel the consequence of their passing into the hands of the French, it would be in vain for me to impress them with an idea of their importance.

I have now got through the three principal points, which, though not known in this country, existed at the time of the preliminary treaty. There is not one of them that does not call for a revision of the preliminaries. Now, Sir, under the next head of things, namely, those which happened in the interval between the preliminaries and the definitive treaty, the catalogue is not numerous; but what it wants in number it makes up in magnitude. It consists of the Italian republic; and the naval and military force sent out from France and now established in the West Indies. The first is the question of a new kingdom (for whether kingdom or presidentship differs but little in the language of the present day) in the heart of Italy. I say, that if such a situation of things had happened without the act or interference of either party, it was competent to a minister to say, here comes a change upon which we did not calculate, therefore it is quite a new case. I say further, that the history of Europe furnishes us with precedents which show that such a change would have been the cause of a war; but what will be said, when it appears that this was done during the interval of the preliminaries, and by one of the contracting parties? It is not that this is not felt as a good cause of war; but the fact is, Europe is so altered that no interested power dare attempt to question it. What must Austria think, when she sees the Cisalpine republic, which she might have originally regarded as a barrier against France, is now a barrier to France for her destruction? We know what Austria feels; but she feels her danger too much to venture upon any steps for redress. The second point bears less upon the present question; but it is of extreme importance, and may hereafter prove a measure of serious inquiry. The way in which I look at it is, the establishment of the French power in the West Indies earlier than it would otherwise have taken place; and which, if it had not taken place so early, would not perhaps have ever been established at all. This is of the more importance when we consider what expectation has been formed of the chances and events which time might produce in the uncertain and unprecedented state of things which the world has so long presented. We do not know what effect delay might have had, or what advantages it might not have given us. We are therefore in a situation in which we should not otherwise have been; for, whatever may be said of the policy of the measure on our part, nobody will contend that by it we were not giving, before the conclusion of the peace, a helping hand to that which, during the war, we had expended so many millions of money, and sacrificed so many lives to destroy.

The third head is that which relates to those points on which the definitive treaty is a departure from the preliminaries. Under this head I shall notice, first, the article respecting prisoners. We all know that there was a large debt due to us by France on this account; and we heard of islands that were to be mortgaged for its payment. The result is that there is no such mortgage, and that the debt is as bad as can be, while we were not able, I suppose, to compel better terms. It became therefore necessary to exercise our diplomatic skill, to discover some plausible way of getting rid of the demand, in the execution of which, I wish, however, our plenipotentiaries had devised some mode that would have reflected less ridicule and disgrace upon the country. As an expedient against the payment for the French prisoners, the French are to set off the demands which they have for the maintenance of the prisoners belonging to our allies in their hands; that is, the expense of clothing and supporting the Russian prisoners. We all remember what a parade was made of the attention paid to the Russian prisoners, and that it was represented by the French government as a compliment paid to the emperor Paul; so that we are made to pay for that very clothing and maintenance which were the lure to decoy that sovereign from our alliance. The next point is the cession of Malta. By the preliminaries this island was not to belong to France or England; but to be restored to the order under the protection of a third power, generally supposed to be Russia. It was originally conceived that Malta was not to be given up; but that would not now be a proper matter for discussion. We shall take it simply upon the condition of the preliminaries. Instead, however, of providing for Malta

Digitized by Google

in the spirit of the preliminaries, a covered way has been devised, by which England is completely ousted, and France put into possession. That such at least will be the result I have no doubt. The first consideration that occurs is, how the order is to be supported. We know that the internal revenue of Malta does not exceed 30,000*l*., a sum not more than equal to the support of the grand master, the various charitable institutions, and the supply of grain. These three objects absorb all the revenue of every description which the island affords; so that for guards, garrison, and the defence of the place, there will be no provision at all. Of the revenues that formerly belonged to the order, those in France, Bavaria, and different parts of Germany, have been confiscated, and those which lay in Spain are on the eve of being so, making in the whole, at least four-fifths of its ancient revenue. Thus situated, the order must soon fall for want of support. I shall not dwell upon the disgraceful mode of modelling it upon the French regular or noble democratic form. It is not of this I complain, but of putting it under the protection of powers under the influence of France; for what is the Neapolitan garrison in fact, but a French garrison? But, supposing it not now under the influence of France; how is that influence provided against by the article which removes the hands of the Neapolitan government? The plan is, that we shall evacuate the island in three months. This stipulation is peremptory. Then comes another clause, enjoining that it shall be delivered up generally; but not attaching to the former clause, and saying to the order. Next comes another clause still more material, which says that the neutrality of the order is proclaimed. What is meant by this neutrality is difficult to understand, and may be variously interpreted. It may be neutrality to say, that ships of war to any number belonging to the neutral nation may come in, or that they shall be all alike excluded. A third way may also be conceived: I mean the admission of an equal number of ships of all nations. Now see the effect of this neutrality in the event of a future war. In such a war, France would have for her allies certainly more maritime powers than England; she would at least have Spain and Holland, while we should probably not have one. Supposing the number of vessels of each power admissible at Malta to be six, France would have there eighteen ships for our six, and so in the same proportion whatever should be the number. Had this stipulation been in the preliminaries, surely it would have been canvassed and set right in the definitive treaty. The next point is the Cape of Good Hope. France has been always mistress of a happy knack of expression; and I do not find that the revolution has changed her style. She has stipulated, that it shall be delivered over in full sovereignty to Holland. Now, there is nothing to bind Holland from making it over to France, and putting a French garrison in it the moment she shall receive it. When, then, we consider how the word "sovereignty" was used in the case of Tuscany and the isle of Elba, we cannot suppose that it was intended to be a mere idle term in the definitive treaty. On the contrary, this industrious use of it affords a lively persuasion that the same will be the result with regard to the Cape.—I shall now pass on to things occurring in the definitive treaty, and which make no part whatever of the preliminaries. The first is one of a gigantic nature, the total absence of all previous treaties. It is the first instance of the kind. It opens to a world of conjecture. It is argued, that we shall gain as much as we shall lose by it; but how this is to happen I am at a loss to comprehend. It may be supposed that the renewal of these treaties would have embroiled us with the continent: But I do not know what those obligations are that would have out-weighed the benefits of the treaties; because these treaties were not made for France, but against her, and for the protection of the other powers. The non-revival of these treaties leaves us, however, with respect to other countries, just in the same situation in which we stood before; so that by this diplomatic analysis, France only is relieved. But, as was said at Lisle, Why get rid of the treaties all in a lump? We were not in the situation of a man with his hand limited to a minute. Surely seven months would have afforded time to make a selection of what should remain and what should be cancelled. There are other points of this class that touch us more nearly. There is one particular part of the empire for which we feel a lively interest, an interest that must be increased in proportion to the loss of so many other acquisitions, and to which we must cling as the last wreck of our empire, I mean our East India possessions.

Digitized by Google

The treaties of 1783 and 1787, the two great epochs of our rights in that quarter, are given up. We are left without the advantages, whatever they may be, of these compacts, and our right is placed upon its original foundation. Now, let that right be ever so good (for I do not dispute its validity), it is material to consider what rights, or rather claims, the French exercised before 1783. Our present state is, therefore, that state of litigation in which we were previous to the treaty of that year. By that treaty we put a guard upon our right; yet such was the force with which the French preferred their claims, that a ship was sunk in the Ganges, and we were on the point of hostilities when the convention of 1787 took place. We are now in that situation in which an attorney might say to his client, "You have a good right of action, go to law:" but if I had a security in my hands, confirming my right and removing my adversary's, I should not be well advised were I to break off the seal, and throw it in the fire, that I might afterwards go to trial where the arbitrator is the sword, and the court a field of battle. We are now left to our right of action; and perhaps the first news from India will be the notice for going to trial. The French were never backward in asserting their claims; and that they should be less forward now I have no reason to suppose. There are other rights of minor importance abandoned, rights which taken singly are of great magnitude, but which sink into nothing in the neighbourhood of the towering heights that surround them. As to the importance of the privilege of cutting logwood in the Bay of Honduras, we read of nothing but quarrels between France and Spain about it. We do not pretend to a right of sovereignty in that quarter. We hold the right by convention, and France will, no doubt, re-assert her pretensions. What these pretensions are it does not appear; but this state of ignorance and uncertainty shows the necessity for calling for papers, and giving the most mature consideration to the subject. The gum trade is another, which we exercise by convention; and I should not forget the right claimed by the Dutch to trade in the Eastern seas. We know the jealousy of Holland in that particular; we know the credit our minister took for the settlement of 1784 on that point; but how this right is to be exercised in future, what precautions have been taken for its security, and whether they are to come from above or from below, does not appear. Among the other points that come next, without contravening the preliminaries, is the House of Orange. When we talk of all the territories and acquisitions which we have surrendered, we are told of those wonder-working things, credit and capital. I wish we could transfer the word "credit" from the 'change, to credit of another kind, to a high sense of honour, to national spirit and immunity from insults; but of all those qualities that made us great, we are now divesting ourselves, as if they were *functi officio*, and their sole object was, to procure us money. France may have ill-treated other powers under her protection; but she has shown that she will not suffer another to abuse them. The dog, though beaten by his master, will fly forward in that master's defence; and we do know powers that, though crouching under France, will be bold and vigorous in her cause, that will fight like Janissaries in the pay of their master. One of them, we are aware, has not waited for the wax to be cold upon the treaty, before it has evinced this temper and disposition. That power, which never spares an enemy, will make all powers to range upon its side. In the case of France, there is no instance of the contrary. Even in the evacuation of Alexandria she acted upon that principle. I wish I could say the same for this country, with respect to the House of Orange. In our abandonment of that prince, no provision has been made for the loss of his private property, or his Stadtholderian authority. It might have been expected, that some indemnification would have been secured for the sacrifice of his patrimony and power; but we have not only done nothing, but the manner in which he has been treated forms the most ridiculous feature of the treaty. The very day we were stipulating a provision, on that very day, and in that very room, and at the very table at Amiens, did the French and Dutch plenipotentiaries sign a defeazance. Our stipulations stated generally, that he was to have an indemnity; but the stipulation of the Dutch minister Schimmelpenninck states, that it shall not be in Holland, the only place in which it could be obtained. So much for the good faith of France in the case of the prince of Orange! See now the king of Sardinia. We could be under no fear of reviving treaties with him; his kingdom was gone,

Digitized by Google

unless, indeed, we might fear to see him come like the ghost that "drew Priam's curtains in the dead of night." It seems as if all sense of national honour was lost; but, though the feeling may be lost to us, it is not so with the by-standers. These things are of consequence, and are founded in reason. I want to know what value France sets upon subjecting us to indignity? I want to know what she and other nations think of our submitting to it? The sentiments of Holland I do know, from a curious paper which she lately published. If these sacrifices were made by us from magnanimity, it would be another thing; but they are known to be made against our will. If I wanted a voucher for all this, I find one in a French paper received this day, and which, if translated, I would have read as part of my speech.* In it the writer talks of Malta as of a place that by the terms of the treaty, must eventually belong to France, and reasons upon several other points in the same disadvantageous line for England. Now, the necessary information upon all these points is only to be had from papers, of which there are none upon the table. Without such papers the real case cannot be known. We cannot know, without them, whether the cordial drop of peace, which we take into our stomachs, may not be something of a deleterious quality that must destroy us. Let us then consider, while we have time, and at least examine the cup in which it has been administered. I move therefore, "That this House will, upon the 18th instant, take into consideration the Definitive Treaty of Peace between his Britannic Majesty and the French Republic, his Catholic Majesty, the Batavian Re-

* Mr. Windham alluded to the following article, which appeared on the 25th of April, in the political department of a literary and political miscellany, called the *Mercure de France*, published every ten days, under the immediate patronage of the French Government:

"TREATY OF AMIENS.

"France, reconciled with all other governments, will never be able to disarm the animosity of those men who are irritated by the spectacle of her greatness, and blinded by the splendor of her glory. When, six months ago, they saw her, in fifteen days, conclude four treaties of peace, and restore tranquillity to sea and land, stunned by so much success, they attempted to contest the brilliant terms of the peace with England. They opened up a most extensive range to the levers of conjectures. They pretended that secret articles balanced the advantages of the public stipulations. Time has shown that there were no secret conditions. Resting on, I know not what, expressions of the English ministers in parliament, they contended that the merit of this peace could not be decided by the preliminaries; that we should wait for the definitive treaty, and then the superiority of Great Britain would be seen.—The definitive treaty has at length been signed, and it is found to be more advantageous, more glorious to France, than the Preliminaries.

"At the time when this first Convention appeared, it was criticised on different grounds. Men considered the benefit which England might derive from the cinnamon forests of Ceylon, and particularly from the superb port of Trincomalée, the true bulwark of India, commanding the Malabar and Coromandel, and all the Archipelago of that Ocean. It was calculated too, not what Trinidad was worth, but what it might be rendered by the skilful industry of the English, less interested, perhaps, about the produce of their own soil than eager to monopolize all the commerce of the Oronoque, and the countries adjacent. In addition to these estimates, so flattering for England, were adduced the riches she was to acquire in the Mysore, conquered during the war of the revolution; and people were inclined to believe that the English had carried to the utmost extent of their wishes, their naval and commercial greatness.

"With this situation of England was opposed that of France, aggrandized by Belgium, Savoy, Piedmont, and part of Germany; disposing without control of Holland, Switzerland, and Italy; fortifying herself in the Mediterranean, by the acquisition of Porto Ferrajo; opening in the North a river famous for its ancient commerce, and a port destined, by its situation, to become the emporium of Europe; recovering Martinique, enriched by English capital; obtaining the Spanish part of St. Domingo; establishing herself in Louisiana, and regaining her settlements in India. Between these two pictures of two states which may cease to be enemies, but never to be rivals, it was not difficult to pronounce which of the two had gained most by the war. It was demonstrated that France had obtained an irresistible preponderance upon the Continent; and that in suffering her maritime power to fall off, she had not lost the elements of it, which consist in her population and her territory.

"Such was the aspect of things which the preliminaries offered; and as they have formed the basis of the Treaty of Amiens, it may be said that the latter was tried by anticipation. Let us now examine whether it does not secure some new advantages to France and her Allies; whether it does not contain certain great features sufficient to render it remarkable in history. The French

Digitized by Google

public, signed at Amiens, the 27th of March 1802."

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, he had but one objection to the motion. He apprehended he need say but little in vindication of the course pursued by his majesty's government relative to the treaty of peace, in not moving any thing upon it themselves. He did not hold it to be consistent with his duty to depart from an established practice in that particular, which practice did not war-

---

were justly alarmed at what was due to England for advances made for the maintenance of more than 20,000 prisoners. The 2nd Article of the Treaty of Amiens diminishes the debt of France. It is agreed that, in the account of the respective advances, shall be stated not only the expenses of all the prisoners of the two nations, but also those of the foreign troops which, before being taken prisoners, were in the pay and at the disposal of either of the contracting parties. Thus the expenses laid out upon the 7,000 prisoners given back to Russia will be stated in deduction from that which France owes to England. The 7th Article secures to France in Guiana an aggrandisement which the 6th Article of the Preliminaries left at least doubtful, as it guaranteed to Portugal the integrity of her possessions. In the conditions relative to Malta, that important fortress, which the friends of England had so often assigned to her, every thing is favourable to France both in the provisional regulations and the definitive arrangements. As long as the island is Neapolitan it will be French; and to make it cease to be so will require the concurrence of all the great powers. If at one day the Maltese Langue should become dominant, the position, the wants, the temper, the nature of that Langue would bring it under the influence of the French government.

"Such then are several positive conventions which render the Treaty preferable in point of advantage for France to the Preliminaries. But it is not what the Treaty expresses that is most advantageous; it is particularly what it does not express, which ought to form the subject of joy to the French and their allies. In all former negotiations, England had insisted on the renewal of ancient treaties, ascending upwards as far as that of Westphalia. With a scrupulous attention did she always enumerate them, date by date, and also give them new force. Every body knows that almost all their treaties were onerous to the maritime powers of the continent, and that they even contained stipulations humiliating for the allies of France. There were coasts in which the Dutch were obliged, in sign of submission, to lower their flag to that of England. This shameful homage had never been contested without producing a war. The reigns of Cromwell and Charles 2nd afford examples of this truth. This species of vassalage is abolished; and, what is more important to commerce, the abrogation of ancient treaties has removed the fatiguing inconveniences which they occasioned to France and her allies in their navigation, in the administration of their colonies, in their whole commercial system.

"If we were, then, to compare the advantages enjoyed by the English in their relations with the continental powers, with the difficulties opposed to the latter by the famous Act of Navigation, we should not any longer be surprised at the degradation into which their marine had fallen even before the war. We should be rather astonished that the English navy had not borne down every thing. The Treaty of Amiens removes all irregularity, all oppression, all restraint. The old law is destroyed; a new public law commences. The French and their allies have gained their naval independence: they will have the sense to make use of it; they will not fall into the snare of a new treaty of commerce; and they may one day have their act of navigation! It is this which distinguishes the Treaty of Amiens from all the old transactions of the same kind. It is this that would render it so advantageous for France, even though it did not put the last seal to that increase of continental power which renders her so formidable, and which already obliges England to swell her expenditure by augmenting her militia.

"There are likewise other features which characterize the Treaty of Amiens, and which will serve to signalize the present epoch. The new Constitution of Malta, happy for France, as I have already remarked, is of itself a political phenomenon, which doubtless would excite much astonishment, if the faculty of astonishment were not in some sort worn out. It is an alliance of aristocracy and democracy, of ancient opinions and of new ideas, of chivalry and philosophy. It is a coalition of two political systems, which had kindled the most cruel war, just as in the Treaty of Westphalia, we see an accommodation between two religions which had been the provocation, or the pretext for long and fatal dissensions. If some years ago there had been a state whose chivalrous spirit could have been supposed capable of excluding all access to the revolutionary principle Malta would, beyond all doubt, have been pitched upon as that state: and yet it is at Malta, that the revolutionary spirit establishes itself after it is weakened every where else! . . . To add to the whimsical air of these combinations, England has contributed, as well as France, to maintain it there. It appears certain at least, that having received from the inhabitants of Malta several plans of a republic, the English have given effect to the

Digitized by Google

rant a motion from government, in that House, upon the subject of a definitive treaty; he had pursued the usual course, and he trusted the House would approve it. Having said this, he would now assure the House he felt great satisfaction at the motion now made, in substance; because it afforded ministers an opportunity of entering into a complete justification of every part of their conduct during the late negotiation at Amiens, and the advice they gave to his majesty to conclude the definitive treaty. His right hon. friend had said, that Porto Ferrajo was surrendered to the French, and he had stated this to be in contradiction of the express stipulations of the treaty of Luneville. This was an act that was not done by his majesty's ministers; the surrender of the grand duchy of Tuscany was a concession made by a sovereign power, fully competent to make such a concession. His right hon. friend had laid some stress on the French territory in Guiana. He had referred to a conversation which took place in that House upon the subject of the treaties of Madrid and of Badajos; it was then stated, that the French territory in this part of the globe was to be limited by the treaty of Badajos, and not by that of Madrid; and it was made a subject of discontent by some gentlemen on that account, and a good deal of stress was laid upon the difference between the two, that of Madrid being more favourable to Portugal than that of Badajos; and, in fact, the Portuguese government expressed, in terms the most explicit, that they should think themselves too fortunate, if we could be instrumental in procuring for them the terms specified, and the boundaries as stipulated by the treaty of Madrid. His right hon. friend had said, that the French insisted on the treaty of Badajos, for the mere purpose of making a merit of abandoning that treaty. The fact was, that this country anticipating the pressure likely to be felt by that country before the knowledge of the signing the preliminary treaty, and the concessions likely to be made in consequence of that pressure, made an express stipulation that the limits of the French possessions in Guiana should be as agreed upon by the treaty of Madrid, but that the European boundary should be fixed by the treaty of Badajos. —His right hon. friend had laid great stress, and very justly, on the establishment on the part of France in Louisiana. He had also said, that the French power would now put into danger the whole of the continent of South America. He was ready to agree, that the interest of Europe were materially connected with the interest of America, both North and South; but his right hon. friend could not say, that if the French had not the extent of territory there which they now possess, they could not, if St. Domingo were tranquil, and affairs at rest with them in that quarter, by a large military force, become formidable to either North or South America, provided the subjects of these states were disposed to offer to them no resistance, and had no inclination to maintain their independence, and provided Great Britain and the rest of the European states were to be indifferent spectators of the scene. Certainly this acquisition of Louisiana was very important to France, and would be looked on with regret by those who wished their dominion limited; but that was no conclusive argument to the point stated by his right hon. friend, that this possession will give them the power over the whole of that part of the globe.—Another point which had been stated by his right hon. friend was, that new matter had arisen since the time of signing the preliminaries. Upon this head, his right hon. friend had recurred to the state of the Italian republic, and the armament which had been sent to St. Domingo. With regard to the first he could only say, it could not but be regarded with anxiety by those who thought

propositions of these islanders in the Treaty of Amiens. Thus democratic principles have found protection from the power that went to war to oppose them!

"But the organization of this new republic and its future figure cannot have any considerable interest, except for France and England. There is in the Treaty a single line respecting the States of Barbary, which produces a more extensive, a more general interest for all Europe. It intimates the design of putting an end to the system of hostilities which subsists between civilized governments and those governments of Africa which the supineness of the former could alone have raised to the rank of powers. Religion formerly endeavoured to repair in this respect the negligence of policy. At length policy cultivates the duty of protection. Its happy intentions are not perhaps very easily realized, but they cannot fall into oblivion. The signal is given. It adds to the importance of the Treaty of Amiens. It honours the negociators whose work that Treaty is, and the government whose confidence they have justified."

Digitized by Google

the power of France too great, or who felt for the independence of the rest of Europe, but this brought the matter back again to the consideration of the preliminaries of peace, the principle of which parliament had recognized. Did his right hon. friend mean to say, that the renewal of the war would have been proper, on account of the objects to which he adverted as having taken place between the signing of the preliminaries and the conclusion of the definitive treaty? He believed not; and if his right hon. friend thought otherwise, he was confident the good sense of the House and the feeling of the public would go in a contrary direction. His right hon. friend had said, that some of the occurrences between the preliminaries and the definitive treaty were such as would at any other time than the present have roused all Europe. Be that as it might, the fact was, that the different states of Europe did not appear to be alarmed, but had sanctioned the very proceedings of which his right hon. friend complained so much. His right hon. friend had laid great stress on the sailing of the armament for St. Domingo. Now, upon considering this matter, in all its bearings, was this armament and its sailing really matter of regret to us? Looking at the state of the West India Islands, he was confident that, whether they were viewed in a national way, or upon the narrower field of individual interest, the usurpation of the Black government was the most formidable of all apprehensions for the safety of those possessions; that, had ministers prevented the sailing of that armament which went to St. Domingo, it would hereafter be matter of sincere regret by the public, and of deep reproach to his majesty's ministers.—The third point alluded to, was that of the departure from the preliminaries; but he should be glad if his right hon. friend would show him where the departure was to be found. He had objected to the expense of paying for the troops of the emperor of Russia. But, was it not proper that those troops which were in the pay and service of the British government, should not, in this case, be considered in the same situation as any of our own would be if prisoners of war in another country?—With respect to Malta, he very much doubted whether the arrangement was not one which was in contemplation by the late administration. He had, however, the satisfaction to know that the Maltese themselves were grateful to Great Britain for the terms procured them. With regard to the word sovereignty, if it was an improper one to be inserted in the definitive, treaty, his majesty's ministers had no excuse; for he believed the word was adopted, not by the French, but by the British government: with regard to the application of it, which was to the Cape, it did not apply to the commerce, but to the shipping; and it was extended to the other contracting parties, namely, Spain and Holland. The policy of this measure might appear a matter of doubt perhaps to some; but he would aver that those who had the best means of forming a correct opinion upon the subject, thought that no disadvantage was likely to result to Great Britain from the change that was adopted in this respect.—His right hon. friend had said, that the treaty did not renew any of those commercial arrangements which it had been customary to renew. Great pains had been taken to set off the supposed disadvantages to us of these omissions. He could at present only say, that if the principle upon which the treaty was agreed to was erroneous, it was, without any plea or excuse, erroneous on the part of his majesty's ministers; for this admission was advisedly so settled. His majesty's ministers were thoroughly convinced, that, under the present state of Europe, they took a part which was best adapted to the real interests of Europe in general, and his majesty's dominions in particular, by abstaining from the renewal of any treaties of commerce. It had been industriously circulated, that a proposition was made by his majesty's government upon this subject, but that it was rejected by France, and that we submitted our wish to their determination. No such proposition was brought forward by either party. His right hon. friend had spoken with peculiar anxiety on the subject of the treaties of 1783 and 1787. Without entering into a justification of ministers, he felt a perfect confidence that they had conducted themselves properly in this particular. His right hon. friend had said, that by the treaty of 1783, the rights of France, in certain commercial points, were surrendered, and those of Great Britain established; and this was carried farther to our advantage, after some ineffectual disputes on the part of France, by the convention of 1787. All he should say at present on that topic was, that no

Digitized by Google

rights whatever, on the part of Great Britain, were surrendered by this treaty. The question of right, as determined either by the treaty of 1783, or the convention of 1787, did not mix itself in the discussion of the present treaty. The rights, therefore, whatever they were, stood untouched. The treaty of 1783, and the convention of 1787, were commercial arrangements; and as to the question of right, whatever it was, it remained untouched. Great Britain had established rights that were anomalous in their nature from those of any other in respect to her India possessions; but, as far as related to Great Britain and France, none of these rights would be affected by any omissions in the present treaty. On the subject of the Bay of Honduras, his right hon. friend had not been so ample as he expected he would have been. We had, for a long series of years, by an established practice, entitled ourselves to very valuable privileges, which we had exercised uninterruptedly during war, as well as enjoyed during peace; and this was not disputed by that power which was most interested in making a case against us. His right hon. friend had closed his comments by a reference to the case of the prince of Orange; it had been said, that that prince was not described in the treaty by his title of prince of Orange. Now, he was not to inform his right hon. friend, that such title had never been recognized by any government of France since the head of that illustrious house had been placed on the throne of Great Britain. His right hon. friend had said, that no effectual stipulation was made with that prince for the loss of his property: this was an objection that might have been made to the preliminaries, and, unquestionably, it was a very important subject. Certainly, the terms were not so favourable for that illustrious family as he could have wished; but the treaty contained terms for adequate compensation; for it is said, that for losses suffered as well in private property as by the change of constitution adopted in that country, an adequate compensation should be procured for the house of Nassau.—The only objection he had to the motion, applied to the day on which it was proposed to bring it forward. He did not know the use of delay in this case. Did his right hon. friend mean to prevent any of the provisions of the treaty from being carried into effect? If he had any specific object besides that of a general censure upon the treaty, let him state it. Did he mean to prevent restitution being made according to the provisions of the treaty? If he did, let him state it. But it was an object, in the prosecution of which, he believed, his right hon. friend would not be countenanced in that House. He wished explanation, he said; let him ask it, and if it was reasonable he would obtain it. He wished for papers; let him state which they were, and with the leave of that House he should have them; but he could not think that so long a delay as was now proposed was necessary previous to the discussion of the subject: he could not help feeling that delay might be productive of very considerable inconvenience; and that of keeping the minds of the public in suspense was not a slight one. Wishing, however, that a full discussion should take place, he should propose, that, instead of the 18th, the 11th of May be inserted in the motion.

Mr. *Thomas Grenville* expressed the utmost astonishment, that the right hon. gentleman should consider fourteen days too long a period for obtaining information. It was impossible to have given any attention to the succinct statement of his right hon. friend, without being convinced that so great and so important were the objects demanding consideration, that the period originally proposed was barely sufficient for that purpose. Was it possible to reflect for a moment on that one feature of the treaty, the total omission of the renewal of all former treaties, and yet maintain that an interval of fourteen days was more than sufficient to prepare the House for the discussion of a point of such extensive importance to our commercial relations? The House had been asked to suspend their judgment till information was procured; but how was information to be procured in the time which he had specified?

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that on a subject which was so important in its nature, though it was undoubtedly proper that sufficient time should be given for the consideration of it previous to its discussion, he could not but think the debate ought not to be unnecessarily suspended. What reason, then, could be given for the delay which was now proposed? His right hon. friend had divided the subject into four heads, but, in his opinion, it might more properly be divided into two; first, whether the alterations which had taken place, whether known or not, since

Digitized by Google

the signing of the preliminaries, ought to have induced ministers to have refused to sign the definitive treaty, on the same terms as the preliminaries. The second head was, the defects, whether of omission or commission, in the definitive treaty. As to the first of these heads, whether these events which were notorious, such as the first consul of France having accepted the presidency of the Italian republic, the surrender of the isle of Elba to France, and the cession of Louisiana by Spain, ought or ought not to have induced ministers to conclude the definitive treaty with France, was a question for future discussion. But it should be recollected, that they were not now known to us for the first time, they had been publicly known for many months; and therefore he was sure that there was no person who had not fully considered this question, and formed his opinion upon it. With regard to the defects of the definitive treaty, he begged to observe, that the custom of France being different from ours upon these subjects, the definitive treaty had been for some time known by the public; and therefore his right hon. friend must have made up his mind with regard to the information which he wanted. Under these circumstances, he could not conceive any reason why the discussion should be delayed. With regard to the information which his right hon. friend said would be necessary previous to the discussion of this subject, it was impossible for ministers to know whether it would be consistent with their duty to grant it, until the nature of the information was known.

Mr. *Windham* said, that one piece of information which he should require would be, to know the effect which the non-renewal of the treaties of commerce would have upon our Eastern trade. This would certainly require some time. The same observation applied as to the business of Honduras. Then with regard to treaties, some of them were certainly before the House, others were before the public, but not in an authentic way; and there were some which he had never seen. But he was not then prepared to state specifically the different papers which it might be necessary to produce previous to the discussion upon this subject.

Mr. *Pitt* said, that if the House fixed the shorter day which had beeen proposed for the discussion of this question, it would be necessary to have much information; and therefore, if his right hon. friend was not now prepared to state distinctly the papers which he wanted, he hoped he would by to-morrow be enabled to put his motion in a precise shape, because it could only be a question of form; for no person could have heard the speech of his right hon. friend without being convinced that it was not made without ample information upon the subject. He was convinced that his right hon. friend would not wish, after the doubts he had stated, that any unnecessary interval of suspense should take place before the opinion of parliament was taken upon the question. It was not his intention to anticipate the discussion; but there was one point to which he could not avoid alluding for a moment. He could not but rejoice that, upon this point, his right hon. friend had not represented our rights as doubtful, though he had spoken of the claims of those who were lately our enemies. He alluded to what his right hon. friend had said about India, one of the great limbs of the power of this country, and one of the great sources of that wealth and commerce which had raised her to her present exalted state, and had assisted in carrying us through that eventful contest which had just ended. When the question came under discussion, it would be found that there was not only no ground for solid, but no pretence even for contentious argument, or plausible cavil; and, therefore, after what he had heard stated, he could not but count the moments till the subject should be investigated, which he hoped required nothing but an impartial discussion to remove all uneasiness from the public mind, because it would prove that there existed a determination in peace to maintain those rights which we had secured and strengthened by war. His right hon. friend had talked of the necessity of producing several treaties; but some of them could not, in point of form, be laid on the table of the House; and with regard to others, it could not be supposed proper to lay before the House the treaties of Westphalia, Ryswick, Utrecht, &c. If gentlemen had not considered all those treaties already, certainly neither a week nor a fortnight would be sufficient to prepare them for the discussion of this question. But in order to ascertain the state of Europe immediately previous to, during, and since the war, the only information that could be given must be in the discussion of the question. With re-

Digitized by Google

gard to the apprehensions, that in consequence of the non-renewal of treaties, particularly that of 1787, the French would establish the pretensions which they had advanced previous to 1787: it would be necessary, in the first place, to ascertain what these pretensions were, and upon what ground they rested. If it should turn out that those pretensions, be they what they might, had no foundation, then, undoubtedly, an inquiry into the subject would be useless. The first question was, whether we were of opinion, that in point of fact our late enemies had no such pretensions, and whether we knew enough of our own rights to say that those which we had maintained in war should not be conceded in peace? He knew enough of those pretensions to state, that they arose out of two foundations, but principally out of the treaty of 1783, which was now done away. As far as they arose out of grants from the Great Mogul (of whom we were in fact the substitutes), these grants must be done away by war as well as treaties. The grants of former Moguls certainly could not be more binding upon us than our own treaties. Voluntary grants could not be more binding than positive treaties. It would be to be considered also, whether what his right hon. friend had said about Honduras might not also be done away by general reasoning? He would not, however, enter into the discussion of these points at present.

The Amendment was then carried.

Debate on Lord Grenville's Motion for appointing a Day to consider the Definitive Treaty of Peace.] May 4th. The order of the day being read,

Lord *Grenville* observed, that having already given his opinion on the preliminary articles of peace, he thought it his duty to abstain from making any observations on some very material transactions which had occurred in the interval of the negotiations for a definitive treaty. This was a rule, which, from personal motives, he had prescribed to himself; but he should have been far from censuring any noble lord who might have adopted a different mode of conduct. When, however, the definitive treaty was concluded, and the contents of it made known to the public, he thought it the precise moment when he was peculiarly called upon to direct the attention of ministers to the subject of an omission, which appeared to him of great consequence, of not stipulating for the renewal of all or most of the treaties before subsisting between this country and those nations with which we had lately been at war. The time that would elapse between the conclusion and the final ratification might have sufficed for some arrangement on that subject; but whether his majesty's ministers availed themselves of that delay or not, he had yet to learn. He understood that, though there never was a subject which more highly interested the welfare of the country, it was not the intention of ministers to submit the treaty to the House by any specific motion; and he acknowledged there might be some excuse for such a proceeding, if the treaty was in fact no more than a detailed execution of the articles of the preliminaries, upon which they had come to an approving vote already. In order, therefore, to lay a ground for his motion, it would be proper for him to show the variations between them, the alterations in some parts, the contradictions in others, and the omissions upon the whole. The first consideration which presented itself was that which he hoped would be ever deemed of most essential importance in the councils of this country, he meant the regard had to national honour and to national faith. This was a consideration, in his mind, of much more moment than any other which could arise on such a subject. Loss of territory might be regained, commerce might be revived, and industry encouraged and invigorated; but honour and faith, once forfeited, could never be repaired but imperfectly, and only by a long series of conduct manifesting an adherence to a different system. Upon this principle he could not but condemn the manner in which the integrity of Portugal had been sported with. We should never forget that, through the whole course of the war, that country had adhered to us with a firmness that shamed the fidelity of much more powerful nations; and he would undertake to assert, without the fear of contradiction, that whatever Portugal had lost in consequence of the war, was solely sacrificed to its attachment to the interest of this country. It was not by any general engagement and guarantee, but by a special and distinct treaty, that British faith was pledged to bring Portugal whole and unimpaired out of the war, instead of which, this peace left that integrity to depend on what was left to Portugal in Europe by the treaty of Badajos, and the

Digitized by Google

territory which it lost, which was of little value in itself, deeply affected the interests of Great Britain, as it left for ever imprinted in the minds of the Portuguese people, that the guarantee and protection of England were not to be relied on. The treaty alluded to also put it out of the power of Portugal any longer to carry the commercial treaty into effect. He would not for the present speak of the value of that treaty to this country, but observe that it was such, in the opinion of Portugal, that, for its maintenance, that country at one period of the war put its very existence to the hazard. If such was the care we took of them in Europe, still less did we protect their possessions in the Indies. By the treaty of Amiens, the boundaries of France in Guiana were circumscribed to the course of the river Ariwari; but this gave the French an entire command of the Amazon river at its source, the command below of the whole Portuguese trade, and the command equally, in time of war, of our Indian navigation. The next object of attention, in regard to British faith, was, the condition of a family, with its adherents, to which we were bound by every tie of friendship and alliance, who were now wandering in foreign parts as exiles, and uncertain of being ever enabled to return to their native country: he alluded to the house of Orange. The interests of that illustrious family were entirely neglected in the preliminaries; and he believed, however desirous they might be of peace, the preliminaries would never have been approved of, if ministers had not declared that the honour and good faith of this country required that a compensation should be made to the prince of Orange. His lordship then enumerated the various kinds of property which the house of Orange heretofore possessed in Holland. He denied that the house of Orange had been elevated by the republic of the United Provinces, which, on the other hand, was itself erected by that House, whose princes held great possessions, not indeed in full sovereignty, nor much short of it, long before the republic started into existence. The dignities of the house of Orange, it was true, had not been formerly recognized by the old government of France; but that was no reason why we should now consent to sink their title into the branch of the house of Nassau, established in the republic of the United Provinces, and only stipulate that it should have a compensation, without providing in what it should consist, or when, or where, or by whom, it was meant to be made. As to its adherents, they were not even alluded to, but seemed to be considered as unworthy of notice, while we saw France stipulating for the security of every Jacobin, in all the nations of Europe, and claiming and obtaining from this country a traitor (Napper Tandy), who appeared in hostile and rebellious arms in Ireland. All these were consequences of the improper construction of those who were to conduct the negotiations at Amiens. France introduced the plenipotentiaries of its two allies into the congress, while those of Portugal and Naples were excluded; probably because they were interested in the result, but more probably because they were the friends and allies of England. By these means it happened, that while lord Cornwallis was putting his signature to the peace, containing the condition of an indemnity to the house of Nassau, the French and Dutch ministers were, without his knowledge and consent, drawing up an agreement at the other end of the table, stipulating that the compensation should not be made at the expense of what was now called the Batavian republic—an act of perfidy and duplicity which he must reprobate in the strongest language. Speaking of the stipulation for each country paying the debts of the prisoners taken on either side, he animadverted on the provisions which included the foreign troops taken while in the pay of each nation. Even in this article so much a matter of form all the advantage was on the side of France. A number of Russian troops had been taken at a time, when they were at our disposal, which in consequence of different political arrangements were afterwards clothed armed and regimented at Brussels, for the purpose of being employed to attack this country. He thought nothing could be more humiliating in us than to be obliged to defray expenses incurred for such a purpose. The Cape of Good Hope according to the preliminaries, was to have been declared a free port, and now reverted in full sovereignty to the Batavian republic. This, in time of war, would make it completely a French port, supposing even that the condition of its being open to the ships of war of the other contracting parties should be complied with. We know the French system in this kind of

Digitized by Google

neutrality to be, that ships of war, of an equal number from each country, should be admitted at the same time. Supposing then, that number to be two each; for two English men of war, the French, Spanish, and Batavian allies, would have six, which would oblige us, at the expense of 25 or 30 ships of the line, either to keep up a great fleet in those seas, or to send convoys with every trading fleet; and every regiment, outward or homeward must be escorted by a force equal to cope with the allies, and to prevent them from attacking our possessions in Hindostan. With regard to Malta, which some considered as not inferior in consequence to the Cape, we were led from the preliminaries to believe that it would be placed under the protection of some power capable of preserving it from the ambitious views of France: this power was probably meant to be Russia, whose weight and influence in Europe might probably have accomplished that end, and the more easily as it had the means of supplying at all times a sufficient force for its defence. This the court of Russia perhaps would not consent to, and the definitive treaty placed it completely under the influence of France. The knights for the future would be wholly unable to maintain it. Their order was partly military and partly religious, and composed entirely of Maltese nobles, who would rather undergo any hardship than associate with that Democratic langue which this treaty proposed, but most probably never could succeed in establishing. The revenues for their support were heretofore supplied from most of the other countries of Europe. These countries had their distinct langues, supported by benefices which could only be held by the knights, whose profession was honourable in their youth, and promised to reward them with considerable possessions when advanced to more mature years. At present, almost all these incentives were gone. The revenues were confiscated in France, on the left bank of the Rhine, and in Bavaria, which contained the richest possessions of the order. Something indeed would remain in Naples, as long as Naples continued any way independent. Something was also left them, the ecclesiastical states; but this, as well as the rest, was held by a very precarious tenure. The revenues of the island itself, partly territorial and partly commercial, were appropriated partly to maintain the splendor of the grand master, which could not be dispensed with; and partly to the support of religious establishments, to the expense of hospitals, and to furnishing a granary for the consumption of the island, which could not produce grain in any proportion to the number of the inhabitants. So that by applying it now to the maintenance of a new democratic langue and the defence of the works, this plunder of the alms-houses would be found wholly inadequate. A Neapolitan force was spoken of for that purpose; but the king of Naples had no interest in the preservation of the island which could induce him to be at that expense. Besides, in time of war, he could never be in a condition to refuse yielding it to the French, in order to assist any project of theirs to intercept our East India trade, or to recover the possession of Egypt. It must, in future, be obedient to what we may call the king of Italy who might at any time march from the new Italian republic, and in forty-eight hours seize upon the capital of the other sovereign. There could be no hesitation, therefore, when the alternative was between the safety of the Neapolitan metropolis and the defence of the island of Malta It was not probable that his Sicilian majesty would embroil himself with the affairs of Malta, while it remained within the grasp of the first consul, and must dread the hostility of England, which would be formidable to him, though by no means so to France. Under these circumstances, he thought it imprudent in this country to give up the possession of that important island at the moment that France, by its late accessions, was so greatly extending its empire on the Mediterranean. The annexing of the new Italian republic to itself would at any other time have been thought a sufficient cause of war; and now the retention of Malta would, on our part, be still an inadequate equivalent. He illustrated this by the comments of a writer in the Mercure de France,* and published under the immediate inspection of the French government, and which, in explaining how the articles of the definitive treaty were advantageous to the republic, added, "that Malta must always be French, as long as it shall be Neapolitan." He then adverted to the immense acquisition made by the French in the ceded province of Louisiana, at the the time that it was also in possession of New Orleans and Florida,

* See the note, p. 575.

Digitized by Google

which gave them an immense influence on the Northern United States, as well as on the South of America. It gave them nearly as much the command of our East India navigation, as it would have in the possession of Ceylon; it brought them within 300 miles of the city of Mexico; the march would be as easy as from Chester to London; and he had no scruple to affirm, that on the unfurling of the first standard for an expedition to Mexico, the whole of the West of America would immediately repair to it in arms,—a circumstance which must ever put Spain in a state of entire dependence upon the French republic. His lordship next proceeded to consider a stipulation in the treaty, for which, he said, there was no precedent; namely, that which went to surrender the claims of British subjects upon the government of France, for losses sustained before the war, or at the commencement of the revolution. In these periods, property of English subjects in the French funds to a considerable amount was confiscated; which was done chiefly by means of that unprincipled manœuvre, by which the French financiers confiscated two-thirds of the funded debt, in order to enable them to pay the remaining third. He next adverted to the non-renewal of ancient treaties, which he would contend was a principle in the process of negotiation equally novel and injurious; and in illustrating these positions, he again referred to the French official papers that he had already quoted, which said, "the old law is destroyed; a new public law commences:" which principle might be most destructively applied by France in her future projects of aggrandizement; and they might well say to us, that, abiding by the treaty of Amiens, which in effect ordained a new law of nations, we had no right (or title to inquire; nor was that the worst, for though these treaties were ineffectual on our part with respect to France, we were bound by the letter of them with regard to other nations, which must certainly lay the seeds of future quarrels and dissentions. Added to these important considerations, there were others which were more of the nature of omissions than of positive stipulations, but which were of equally injurious tendency. He first adverted to the point of the honour of our flag in the British seas not being asserted, and which would, in an inconceivable degree, go to abate the spirit of our seamen, on whose ardour and exertions our best hopes always depended; and this point was settled by formal stipulation in the treaty of 1783. Another point was, the omission with respect to the regulation of the gum and the logwood trade. He then observed upon what had fallen from a noble lord on a former evening to the effect, that whatever claims should be demanded by France, would be founded on the arguments urged by him (lord G.) Nothing, however, could be a greater misunderstanding. Never could any man possibly be less the advocate for France than he was; and if the cause were never pleaded but by him, it would be very feebly urged indeed. His opinion upon the effect of the omissions with respect to the navigation of the eastern seas remained unaltered. In the treaty of 1783, it was stipulated that we should continue quietly to exercise our rights in that respect; and these were held of such high importance, that the treaty of 1787 was negotiated principally with the view of ascertaining those claims, and to avert a war which was just about to be entered into, in consequence of the unfounded pretensions of France in that respect. He thought that a distinct explanation should take place even now with France upon this point, which might be effected in five days, and before the cession of the cape, Malta, &c. was carried into effect. He then touched upon the recent acquisitions made by France on the continent of North America, and adverted to the unfavourable effects they might have upon the interests of this country in that quarter, particularly with respect to our West India commerce in periods of war. From this topic he passed to the acquisitions of territory made by France on the continent of Europe, and the serious consequences with which they were fraught; and, drawing to a conclusion, he recalled to the recollection of the House some of the leading passages of the last speech of the illustrious king William, which ought ever to be impressed upon their lordships minds, respecting the aggrandizement of France at that period, in consequence of a prince of the house of Bourbon being placed on the throne of Spain, by which the French king would become master of the whole Spanish monarchy; in consequence of which this country could never experience the blessings of real peace, but must continue to be exposed to all the expenses and inconveniences of war. This reasoning, his lordship con-

Digitized by Google

tended, applied most emphatically to the state of the two countries at the present period. His lordship concluded by moving, "That the Definitive Treaty of Peace be taken into consideration on the 14th instant."

Lord *Pelham* said, that with regard to the non-renewal of the several treaties existing with foreign countries before the commencement of the war, he was ready to admit that the definitive treaty would have given him more pleasure, if it had contained a stipulation for the revival of those treaties, but his majesty's ministers had made as good conditions as they were able to obtain under the situation and circumstances of the contracting powers; and, inadequate as the terms might in some instances be held to be, he flattered himself, that if it were possible collectively to take the sense of the people upon the peace such as it was, they would rather have it than continue the war. He had been somewhat disappointed, at not having heard from the noble lord one single argument to convince the House of the necessity for taking the definitive treaty into consideration. The noble lord had also forborne to state the motion that he meant to propose. He saw not, for his part, any good that could arise out of a consideration of the treaty, nor what it could end in, unless it was meant to move a censure upon ministers. If, however, it was thought desirable to take the treaty into consideration, the sooner that was done the better, as no good could arise from delay. The noble lord had stated several important topics as variations in the definitive from the preliminary treaty; but he could not admit that they were variations; and where they differed at all, it was in being more fully explained in the definitive treaty than they had stood in the preliminaries. As to the breach of public faith to the queen of Portugal, he did not think that charge at all imputable to this country; as far as it was in the power of ministers, they had stipulated for the integrity of her most faithful majesty's territories and possessions as they were previous to the commencement of the war; and as to the exception relative to the limits of the French possessions in South America, that article was stipulated between Portugal and the French by a separate treaty, over which Great Britain had no control, not being a contracting party; but ministers had obtained an explicit definition of those limits, which were determined by the fall of the river Arawari into the ocean below the North Cape near the Isle Neuve, and the Island of Penitence. With regard to the House of Orange, undoubtedly it had been stated, when the preliminaries were under consideration, that there were hopes of obtaining for the prince of Orange such a compensation as would be entirely satisfactory; but though they had not been able to succeed, they had prevailed so far as to induce the French to make a public acknowledgment that the House of Orange had suffered losses in what was now termed the Batavian republic, and to declare that an adequate compensation should be procured to the prince for his losses. In respect to the Cape, they had procured a full explanation of the stipulation respecting it, which was to be found in the definitive treaty. He denied that the construction put upon the condition relative to the Russian prisoners was the true construction; he could not admit, that this country was to be at the expense of furnishing and clothing them. With regard to Malta, it had been hoped that the emperor of Russia would have accepted the guarantee of the island's independence, which he owned would have been more desirable than the present arrangement respecting the island; but if they could rely on the good faith of France, the danger the noble lord apprehended was not likely to arise. His lordship concluded with moving an amendment, by inserting the 12th instant, instead of the 14th.

Lord *Thurlow* insisted that all subsisting treaties were at an end as soon as a war was commenced with those who were parties to them. It behoved those, therefore, who plunged the country into the war, not to have set the treaties loose by commencing hostilities; but it by no means followed as a matter of course, that ancient treaties were necessarily to be revived and renewed in every treaty of peace; that must depend on the will of the contracting parties.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, that if by the omission of the mention of former treaties they were all to be considered as abrogated, and if the public law of Europe was thus altered, he had no difficulty in saying, that an address should be voted to his majesty, praying that he would dismiss his present ministers from his councils for ever. But he trusted that the fact was far otherwise, and that the con-

Digitized by Google

duct of ministers deserved no such censure. He should not at present attempt to answer the noble lord, considering that a time would come when he might do it with more propriety.

Lord *Auckland* said, he had heard with the liveliest satisfaction what had fallen from the noble mover, with respect to our rights in India. It certainly had been imputed to him on the continent, and pretty generally believed in this country, that he had declared these rights to depend upon the treaties of 1783 and 1787. But he had now affirmed in the most decided and manly manner, these rights to be inherent in us as sovereigns of Bengal. He himself was in possession of information which he should take an early opportunity of laying before the House, and which would clearly prove that the French had not the shadow of a claim to disturb us in the exclusive enjoyment of our possessions and privileges in that quarter of the world.

The amendment was agreed to.

Debate on Mr. Nicholls's Motion for an Address respecting the Removal of Mr. Pitt.] May 7. Mr. *Nicholls* said, that he felt it his duty, on public grounds, to draw the attention of the House to the misconduct and delinquency of the late administration, but more particularly the criminality of the late chancellor of the exchequer, whom he individually selected as the main object of his motion, not merely because he had been the most prominent figure in the whole group, but forasmuch as there were many points of heinous delinquency which attached exclusively to that right hon. gentleman. It was impossible to canvass this subject so fully as it deserved without going into a retrospect of the conduct and management of the late war. At the commencement of that unhappy contest, the right hon. gentleman rested his ground for the necessity of embarking in hostilities, on the plea that Great Britain was in honour bound to protect the Austrian Low Countries from the usurpation of France, and to rescue and deliver Holland. Had ministers obtained these objects? The very reverse: Austria had lost her domains of the Low Countries, and Holland was subdued by France. The right hon. gentleman had embarked in this war for the delivery of Holland, with the enthusiasm of a political Quixote. He had volunteered the service; no claim, no demand being made upon us by the Dutch, who, on the contrary, deprecated our interference. As little were we called upon to meddle in the dispute with the Austrian government. Having failed, then, in his attempt to effect the delivery of Holland and of Belgium, the right hon. gentleman, with an aptness at tergiversation which defied all parallel, set up another plea, and assuming the *ore rotundo*, with a mouth vaunting great things, boasted, as his next object, the attainment of "indemnity for the past, and security for the future." How has he succeeded in this part of his project? What is the indemnity, what the security he has obtained for us? So far from diminishing the power of France, that government had assumed colossal growth; so far from suffering any dismemberment of her provinces, any retrenchment of her territories, she had extended her dominions beyond the limits the proudest ambition ever dreamt of. The language which France now held out in concluding peace was twofold; as applying to herself, she adopted the maxim of *uti possidetis* as applying to this country, she insisted on the *status quo ante bellum*. Thus she was to retain all that she had acquired, whilst we were called upon to refund all we had gained during war. A third object was then set up, and the House and the country at large told, that the war was unavoidable on our part in order to extinguish French principles. In this point of view likewise the right hon. gentleman had completely failed. He was aware, that with respect to French principles, he might entertain opinions very different from many gentlemen on the opposite side of the House. On the present occasion, however, he should not enter into a discussion of abstract principles; but take the term in the sense in which it was employed and used by themselves. He would take the term as used and defined by Mr. Burke; and, adopting his interpretation, say, that ministers professed to carry on the war for the purpose of restoring the anciently constituted authorities of France; and that there might not be, in the centre of Europe, the dangerous example, as to them appeared, of the successful insurrection of a people against their rulers. Had they succeeded in this attempt? No. Yet this was the only point of view in which the war could possibly be productive of beneficial consequences. He, for his part, did not agree with the right

Digitized by Google

hon. gentleman in the representations he thought fit, from time to time, to make of the general temper and disposition of the country. He, for his part, did not believe that any great portion of the people were infected with Jacobin principles. Several trials had taken place for acts of alleged treason; many persons had been taken up and confined under the suspicion of treasonable machinations; yet were ministers not able to produce a single proof that there existed large and formidable bodies of men who panted for innovation, and who wished for revolution. Under the pretence of guarding the country from imaginary evils, this political Quixote, this fighter of windmills, had exposed it to real ills. Under the pretence of weakening, he had strengthened and aggrandized France. The more he reflected on the ruinous consequences of the late war, the more did he feel impressed with gratitude to the present ministers for having concluded peace. It was the war which rendered that peace necessary; that calamitous and destructive war, begun and carried on by the late administration, and which had terminated in a total failure and miscarriage of all the objects for which they pretended to undertake it. Waiting, however, the issue of the war, he would now proceed to investigate the point, whether, and how far, the right hon. gentleman had manifested ability and skill in the conduct and management of it? On this subject there were three wise and fundamental maxims which he wished to press upon the attention of the House. They had been ably stated in a political work, by a late writer, certainly no way attached to the revolution and existing government of France; but yet, who had loyalty, sagacity, and penetration sufficient to see the impracticability of conquering France on the system proposed by the right hon. gentleman. That intelligent writer had laid it down as an essential maxim, in the first place, never to trust to the accounts which emigrants give of the state of the country from which they have expatriated themselves. The second point was, never to rely on the success of the invasion of a country because dissentions may obtain among its inhabitants. In case of invasion, says this able politician, party dissentions will be laid aside, and all will unite against the common enemy. The third and last maxim was, never to believe that the success of an invasion can be calculated and determined by the state of the finances of a country. Now, let us see how far the right hon. gentleman has adhered to those salutary maxims. It is no small part of wisdom, if a man be not over-sagacious himself, to profit from the foresight of others. But the right hon. gentleman was, in this respect, incorrigible. He placed implicit reliance on the statements and representations made to him by the emigrated noblesse of France, and built his schemes on the report of persons whose interest it was to deceive him. Were these the proofs of his transcendant abilities, these the credentials of his being "a heaven-born minister?" He would now pass on to another of the right hon. gentleman's experiments. How far it was consistent with morals and the dictates of humanity, to form the project of starving a whole nation, he should not stop to inquire, but confine himself merely to the result of that notable experiment. It was to that scheme, and to the badness of the preceding harvest, that we owed the scarcity with which we were ourselves afflicted in 1795. To bring back the corn trade to its regular channel, the right hon. gentleman was obliged to drain the country of its specie, in order to procure corn from the foreign markets; the consequence of which was, the stoppage of the Bank in 1797. Such was the result of the right hon. gentleman's humane attempt to starve twenty-five millions of fellow-beings! The next point on which he should animadvert was the ambiguity of the right hon. gentleman's conduct. By this he had alienated not only the best of the royalists, but had more particularly forfeited the alliance of the king of Prussia, who deserted us the moment he perceived that our views were directed to our own aggrandizement. The French Royalists felt outraged, and justly so, when they saw us take possession of Valenciennes, not in trust for the French princes, but for Austria; and Toulon, with the fleets of France, in the name of the king of Great Britain. In the article of subsidies, the right hon. gentleman had carried his system to a length far beyond any of his predecessors. It was the enormous and lavish subsidies granted to foreign powers which most essentially contributed to the hardships, distress, and scarcity, under which the country laboured. As to the system which he had pursued with respect to St. Domingo, it was difficult to say what was his real aim

Digitized by Google

in these transactions, whether he meant to take possession of that island in trust for the French king, or to establish in it a government of Blacks. If the former had been his object, he might easily have attained it, as the inhabitants would willingly have submitted to royalty. On the first expedition sent to that island, only 750 men were employed; yet before we had done with it, it cost 25,000 lives, and two millions of treasure. In 1799, the memorable expedition to Holland was undertaken, another Quixotical experiment, which ended in discomfiture and disgrace. Then followed the infraction of the treaty of El-Arish, which event, among other lamentable consequences, put it out of our power to protect and succour our ally Portugal. The army under the justly lamented Abercromby, which might have defended Portugal, was obliged, in consequence of the breach of the treaty of El-Arish, to be sent to Egypt. The next instance of incapacity and delinquency was the answer sent to the overture made by Buonaparte. He would appeal to the House whether there was a single gentleman at this moment who did not regret the rejection of the overture made by Bounaparté, in 1800. The peace which had just been concluded was on terms much worse, and far more humiliating. And what infinitely aggravated the guilt of the right hon. gentleman was, that, at the very time when he scornfully rejected the overture, he knew the country to be labouring under the deepest distress, struggling with famine, and involved in difficulties from which peace alone could relieve us; yet turned he a deaf ear to all remonstances, and determined to persist in his career of war and bloodshed. For this purpose, he excited Austria, in the autumn of 1800, to renew the war, though he must have foreseen that she was not in a state to prosecute hostilities. The consequence was that Austria was completely subjugated by France and compelled to sue for peace. One of the next incidents in this eventful chapter was, the unfortunate dispute with the Northern powers; a dispute which might easily have been prevented, by giving up Malta to the emperor of Russia. Why such a measure should be deemed impolitic, he was at a loss to conceive. In his opinion, Malta, under the auspices of Naples, was infinitely more likely to be dependent upon France, than if it had been placed under the direction of Russia. Yet, rather than concede this point, the minister chose to embroil the country in a dispute, which, but for the opportune death of the late emperor Paul, might have led to the most disastrous consequences. That the war was now over, even under disadvantageous circumstances, afforded him sincere satisfaction. He was ready to admit that the terms of the peace were not the most auspicious, and that they were such as could only be justified by the calamities brought upon us by the war. But however infelicitous the terms, they reflected in no wise on the present administration, who were justly entitled to the praise and credit of having restored to the country the blessings of peace—whilst all the miseries under which the country had so long laboured, and all the inconveniences it must still continue to experience, were ascribable to the measures pursued by the late administration. There was one point on which he knew the late prime minister not a little prided himself, and for which he had great credit given him by his friends. This was his rare abilities as a financier. He wished to see how far the right hon. gentleman's pretensions were well-founded. In this view, he should analyse some of his boasted acts. To commence with the Income tax. What was the effect of that odious measure? It operated to the degradation of the English character; it debased the man, and compelled him to submit to an inquisitorial system, totally repugnant to the principles and spirit of the British constitution. What was his sale of the land tax? What but an act equally impolitic and unwise? He boasted of having kept up the funds. True, he had done so—but how? By an injurious extension of paper money; by an exorbitant rise in the price of all the necessaries of life; by reducing the tradesman to poverty and wretchedness, and by filling the poor-houses with thousands of miserable inhabitants, who, for the last two years were doomed to perish, to the amount he would not say of hundreds, but of thousands. [Strong and general murmurs]. I say, Sir, that thousands of persons have perished in the poor houses within the last two years. If any gentleman doubts the accuracy of this statement, let him move for a committee of inquiry, and I pledge myself to produce such damning proof as shall make his hair stand on end. The right hon. gentleman claims great merit as a finance minister.

Digitized by Google

What are his claims? He has added 258 millions to the national debt, and entailed little short of national bankruptcy upon us. These are his merits, these his claims. I do not wish to exaggerate his faults; I do not wish to load him with unjust accusations and reproach; I allow that he is not a man of avarice, but he certainly is a man of inordinate ambition. Though he may not have received bribes himself, yet he has carried the system of corruption to a length altogether unprecedented. His prototype, sir Robert Walpole, was a mere child in the art and mystery of corruption compared to the right hon. gentleman. Look only to the lavish use he has made of his official patronage,—no less than 100 new peerages, and 580 pensions! Yes, Sir, corruption was the instrument that he wielded.—But I proceed now to a point of far greater delinquency than any that I have yet touched upon. I am now going to canvass an act, the criminality of which has never been surpassed. When he finds himself no longer able to continue in office, he throws out lures, hopes, and temptations, to a very numerous and respectable body of his majesty's subjects, to look up to him as their only chance of redress. He endeavours to agitate a question big with the most momentous political interest; he endeavours to set the whole Catholic body in motion, and to alienate their affections from their sovereign. This, Sir, I maintain, is a criminality of the deepest dye, and the atrocity of which rests entirely with himself. Little inferior to this, in point of guilt is his conduct towards the royal family. He has dared to make a distribution of the civil list in loans to the king's sons, with the iniquitous view of rendering the princes of the blood dependent on his pleasure and of creating discord among the royal family. Is this not cause for serious animadversion and impeachment? If, haply, any of the king's sons should want a larger sum than it would be convenient to grant out of his majesty's purse, parliament ought to be applied to, who would readily make the necessary provision, without inquiring too minutely into particulars; for the children of the sovereign are ever regarded as the children of the state. The right hon. gentleman has uniformly pursued a very different, and, with respect to the royal family, a very unbefitting system. The prince has been kept out of his patrimony, and all applications for inquiry into his rights refused. That to which he had a fair claim has been pitifully doled out to him as a boon. This it must be conceded, is no common instance of delinquency; it is a crime perilous to the constitution, and which endangers the vital interests of the country. A noble lord having given notice of a motion of thanks to his majesty's late ministers, I have felt it my duty to call the attention of the House to the conduct of the late chancellor of the exchequer, to analyse his claims, and to put the House upon its guard against a rash committal. Let us take care that we do not establish a power which may set that right hon. gentleman above his sovereign. The measure now in agitation to move a vote of thanks to the man whom his sovereign has discarded and dismissed, appears to me novel and dangerous. I call upon the House to guard the constitution with a vigilant and jealous eye. I call upon it, likewise, to guard and protect the power of royalty. What I have said, I have spoken from pure and patriotic motives. I stand totally unconnected with party. I shall now conclude with moving, "That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, expressing the thanks of this House to his majesty for having been pleased to remove the right hon. William Pitt from his councils."

Mr. *Jones* seconded the motion.

Lord *Belgrave* rose to move an amendment to the motion of the hon. gentleman. He could hardly think the hon. gentleman meant seriously to press his motion, as it was notorious that his right hon. friend had resigned his situation, and had not been dismissed his majesty's service. The consequence of agreeing to this vote therefore would be, that the House would thank the king for doing what he had not done. The noble lord said, he could not help anticipating a general and cordial support to the motion which he should conclude with. He entertained that expectation, from the disposition apparent in the House on a former evening, when the subject was first started, and from the nature of the motion itself, which embraced a general vote of approbation of the leading measures of his majesty's councils during the late war, which had been frequently the subject of commendation in that House, and recorded in the Journals in terms most honourable and flattering. But, though the conduct of government had been several times applauded in detail, there was this novelty in the motion

Digitized by Google

he was about to propose, that gentlemen would be now called upon to bring into view the general merits and demerits of government, and, upon a conscientious revision of their whole conduct during the war, to decide for or against the motion he intended to submit to their consideration; and he was far from wishing any gentleman to vote with him who did not feel entirely satisfied that their merits very much outweighed their defects. He thought indeed that, considering with the smallest portion of candour, the unprecedented difficulties of the late contest, and the liability of man to err, it would not be conceived extraordinary, if the late government should occasionally have betrayed, in their conduct, the imperfection of human nature. In the motion which he intended to propose, he included those ministers who had been principally concerned in conducting the affairs of the nation in the arduous contest in which it had been engaged; but he meant certainly to point both the vote and his remarks chiefly to the late chancellor of the exchequer, who had been, for so many years the leading member of his majesty's councils, and to whom the country was, above all others, indebted for the distinguished character that it at present held. The other ministers who held high responsible situations, would partake in the honour of the vote in proportion to their merits, or conscientious discharge of their duty, and undoubtedly, in proportion to the opinion entertained by the House and the public of their respective services. He should now proceed to touch upon some of the leading circumstances of the late war, and the conduct of the government. In the first place, he wished principally to hold up to the contemplation of the House, the striking contrast between the situation of the country at the present moment, and at the end of the year 1792—he said at the present moment, because, although last year a new administration had succeeded to the management of public affairs, yet, in the conduct of the war, they followed the system adopted by their predecessors in office. Comparing, then, the present period with that of the end of the year 1792, let him ask the House, whether they did not feel themselves a little more secure now? than they did at that time? Whether they did not feel themselves very much in the situation of mariners, who had just escaped the dangers of the most tremendous storm they had ever encountered, and who looked back upon the scarce subsiding waves with emotions of calm delight, and unspeakable satisfaction? Every man, not lost to all virtuous and honourable feeling, or whose intellects were not wholly benumbed, must have felt at the end of the year 1792, and at other periods of the war, no common anxiety for the fate of his king and country. Let them turn their eyes on their present situation, on the vessel of the state, having weathered the storm, riding in triumph and security in her native port and then let him ask the House, whether some credit was not due to those who had steered her uninjured through a sea so threatening, so awful, and so tempestuous? He could not avoid shortly stating a few of the most prominent features of the dangers they had escaped by the fortitude and exertions of the late administration. They had had not only France to contend with, but French principles supported by arms. They had not only a foreign enemy, but a domestic one to alarm them and increase their difficulties. While they had recourse only to legitimate means of carrying on the contest, France, in a state of unbridled licentiousness, had recourse to depredation, confiscation, and blood, to recruit her continually-exhausted finances. In the early part of her revolution too, the deformity of her principles was veiled by appearances so specious and alluring, that they for a while infused their fatal poisons even here; and the disaffected availed themselves of the delusion to spread their treasons in England, Scotland, and especially in Ireland, where the materials to work upon were more combustible, and better suited to their diabolical designs. Without dwelling, however, on this part of the subject, he should only add his firm conviction, that had it not been for the vigilance and firmness of his majesty's government, at the time when the life of our beloved monarch was traitorously endangered, dreadful would have been the confusion, desolation, and bloodshed in this metropolis.—The next point he wished to advert to was, their great success in the contest in different parts of the world. In the course of the late war their conquests had been many, their losses none. The House had had repeated opportunities of contemplating with admiration the immortal exploits of the navy; the army too had excited their applause and eternal gratitude. He begged leave then, to ask,

Digitized by Google

whether some merit was not attributable to those who directed the public service, preparatory to such splendid achievements? It was the publicly declared opinion of one of the greatest heroes of this or any other country, that a large share of the merit due to the ever-memorable victory of the Nile was attributable to those who originated and planned that expedition. If they turned their eyes to India, the conquests in that distant quarter of the globe had established their reputation on a basis so firm, that the country need not be apprehensive of the security of their possessions there, under the direction of hands less able, and understandings less enlightened and comprehensive than those of the present governor-general, who had acted a master-part in the late splendid transactions in that part of the British empire. If he should be asked, how he connected their conquests in India with the late government? he should in his turn ask, whether the governor-general's instructions did not come from hence? And if he should be asked, how he connected lord Wellesley more especially with the late chancellor of the exchequer? He would say, was he not brought up in the school of his right hon. friend? Did not the House see him within a very few years strenuously and ably contending with him here for the maintenance of the honour, dignity, and character of the nation, in the great contest in which they had been engaged? He ought not, in that place, to omit to give the merit due to the late government, for the promptitude with which they called forth and organized the patriotic zeal of the nation, manifested by all ranks, in the alacrity with which they voluntarily stepped forth to defend the country against the threatened invasion. He next came to speak of the Union with Ireland, which was too remarkable a feature of the late government to be overlooked—an union which originated in an attempt, on the part of France, to disunite us for ever, but which ended in a union entire, and, he trusted, indissoluble. Already the good effects of the Union began to show themselves in Ireland, by diminished irritation and augmented confidence and industry. Here too, he might be allowed to speak favourably of its effects; for he could confidently appeal to the Speaker and the House, whether more propriety of conduct, urbanity and good sense, had been ever witnessed, than in the persons of the Irish gentlemen? He congratulated the House and the country upon it; and, although the union was as yet in its blossom only, he thought he might fairly anticipate its fruit ripening, and that speedily, into richness and abundance. And to what influence and persevering resolution were they chiefly to attribute the union, but that of the late chancellor of the exchequer? He considered it unnecessary to go into any detail, to prove the increase of the commerce and credit of the nation under the fostering protection of the late government, or to specify the many wise laws introduced by them for the security and welfare of the people. He was aware that he had omitted topics which might have been brought forward in just eulogium of the late ministry; but he could not forget one, on which the reputation of the late chancellor of the exchequer might be considered principally to rest; he meant his unrivalled talents in managing the finances of the country. By his sinking fund system, he had wisely contrived to uphold the public credit, and to ease the burthens of posterity; but, what was worthy of peculiar admiration was, that, in the midst of a contest of unexampled difficulty, his right hon. friend had had the resolution to leave the sinking fund untouched, and to have recourse only to legitimate sources of revenue to supply the necessary means of carrying on the contest with vigour: but he did more; for, trusting to the firmness and disinterested magnanimity of the country, even at the time when nearly two millions had been voluntarily contributed to the support of the war, he proposed the tax on income as a war impost, which was readily adopted, though it fell at the moment with peculiar weight on the country. This tax, excellent in theory, though somewhat defective in operation, was a most powerful weapon in the hands of his right hon. friend to fight the battle of the revolution, of public credit, and of the country. In fine, he might be truly said to have established a system of finance, by means of a rigid adherence to the integrity of the sinking fund, in times even of great peril, which might be called the magna charta of public credit, which no future minister would venture to depart from, and which, whilst it attracted the admiration of this and other countries, was calculated to preserve the country wealthy, prosperous, and independent.—He was now going to

Digitized by Google

tread upon somewhat more delicate ground, as he was going to speak of the personal character of his right hon. friend. For seventeen years abundant in trying events had he been at the head of his majesty's councils; and though seventeen years, in the countless periods of eternity, might appear inconsiderable in the life of man, the period was not short; for if it had pleased God to have removed him from this world, at that awful moment when it was of so much importance to any man to be able to reflect that he had spent his life in active virtue, and not in idleness and dissipation, he would ask the House, whether they did not think his right hon. friend might with truth have declared, "For seventeen years I have served my country with unsullied integrity, entire personal disinterestedness, the most laborious diligence, with perfect devotion to its interests, and with constant zeal for its happiness and prosperity." That his talents were transcendant, no one would dispute; but while he was delivering this well-merited eulogium on his right hon. friend, so grateful for him to utter, and the House to hear, he was not so dazzled by the splendor of his character, as not to think that he perceived some political defects; for where was perfection to be found on earth? But these defects, far from eclipsing his fame, were only like transient clouds, that by contrast rather tended to heighten the lustre of this great political luminary. The noble lord then moved an amendment to the question, by leaving out from the word "That," to the end of the question, in order to insert these words: "it is the opinion of this House, that by the wisdom, energy, and firmness of his majesty's councils during the late arduous contest, supported by the unparalleled exertions of our fleets and armies, and by the magnanimity and fortitude of the people, the honour of this country has been upheld, its strength united and consolidated, its credit and commerce maintained and extended, and our invaluable constitution preserved against the attacks of foreign and domestic enemies."

Mr. *Thornton*, in seconding the amendment, said, that after what had passed, he thought it a tribute of gratitude justly due from the House to the late administration. He had uniformly been of opinion, that this country did not seek the war, but that it was forced upon us by the ambition and restless interfering spirit of the enemy. In the eventful contest that we had witnessed, it could not but be expected that disasters must occur. They had, however, been met with a manly spirit. It had often fallen to his lot to witness the spirit and talents of the right hon. gentleman against whom the original motion was pointed; and he could say with truth, that more integrity, cool deliberate penetration, and promptness of execution, he had never seen or read of in any man.

Mr. *Grey* thought it necessary, before the House proceeded farther, that the opinion of the Chair should be taken, whether the motion now offered could be received in the shape of an amendment. He had always understood that an amendment should partake of the nature of the original motion; but the amendment reversed the whole shape of the question. He could not help thinking that the regular mode of proceeding would be, first to negative the original proposition. The noble lord might then have an opportunity of submitting his motion in the form of a substantive proposition.

The *Speaker* said, that so far as he understood the forms of the House, the amendment was one which might regularly be submitted, though it certainly was of a very unusual sort.

Mr. *Wilberforce* conceived that the amendment was strictly consistent with order. The hon. gentleman on the other side had taken a view of the measures of his right hon. friend late at the head of his majesty's councils, and, as the result of this review, had made the motion which he had submitted to the House. The noble lord had taken a view of the same measures during the same period, and from this he had drawn an inference of a description precisely opposite, and had made it the ground of his amendment. The amendment was, therefore, not in reality different from the motion, but a different inference from the same facts. He remembered instances of similar amendments being received.

Mr. *Fox* contended, that if the noble lord disapproved of the original motion, he might propose an amendment, differing totally in substance, but he had no right to vary the form of the motion. The original motion was for an address to his majesty, and the amendment of the noble lord submitted to the House a distinct abstract proposition. He could not help thinking, therefore, that the amendment was irregular.

Digitized by Google

The point of order was here settled, and the debate resumed.

Mr. *Gunning* said, that if ever there was an occasion on which he more particularly rejoiced at having a seat in that House, it was upon one which enabled him thus publicly to declare the sentiments which he had ever entertained of the measures of the late administration, and to give way to those feelings of gratitude with which his mind was impressed when he considered that to them we were indebted for the preservation of our rights, our liberties, and independence, after a contest the most arduous. The more he reflected upon the importance of the struggle in which we had been engaged, the more reason did he see for ascribing praise to those whose unremitting efforts in the public service had enabled us, under Divine Providence, to maintain with unsullied honour, unimpaired credit, and unexhausted resources, that distinguished situation which we ever held among the nations of Europe. To the abilities, genius, and activity of the late chancellor of the exchequer was it owing, that we had survived the wreck of nations, in a contest, not entered into by the enemy for the ordinary purposes of war, but for the subversion of our constitution, and of our civil and religious establishments. It was to the destruction of these invaluable blessings that all their hostility was directed, as the only road to our defeat and ruin. For this purpose, domestic traitors were encouraged to disseminate their pernicious principles, eradicating all virtuous sentiments political and religious. Upon these means they calculated, as upon a slow, yet certain poison; but they knew not that we possessed an antidote in the wisdom, promptitude, and decision of the right hon. gentleman. In proportion as the evil grew alarming, the resources of his exhaustless mind suggested the remedy. He called for, and that House with a well-grounded confidence granted, new and proportionate powers to government for its suppression; and it was difficult which most to admire, the discretion or the firmness with which he made use of them. In vain should we have relied upon the valour and discipline of our fleets and armies, and the patriotic spirit of our countrymen, while the enemy was menacing our coasts, had not his vigilance rendered abortive designs likely to prove more fatal in their effects than the open attack of invaders. There was one subject upon which, he was sure, they could not be at variance; he meant the unqualified approbation which was due to the naval arrangements during the late contest. They would, he was confident, join with him in bestowing on a noble earl, lately at the head of the Admiralty, that tribute of applause to which his services had so justly entitled him. He trusted the House would not refuse to confirm that approbation which it had so long bestowed on the measures of the late ministers. While they remained in office, they acted with zeal, with vigour, and with integrity; when they resigned, they did so from the most conscientious motives, but in the full possession of the confidence of their country.

Sir *H. Mildmay* said, that he neither cordially approved the original motion nor the proposed amendment. To the former he objected in principle, and the latter he considered a very inadequate testimony of the public feelings on the conduct of his right hon. friend. From those who approved the principles of the war, and the object upon which it was undertaken and pursued, he thought a more distinct mark of applause was due to the late minister. He was the only person pointed at in the motion of censure, and he therefore thought that it was on his conduct alone that the House were bound to pronounce. He thought the attack that had been made was not cured by a general lumping vote of thanks, including a dozen different persons, whose merits, exertions, or responsibility, could by no possibility be the same. He did not think it necessary to advert to the various important measures that had distinguished the long services of the late minister, many of which were alone sufficient to justify an expression of the public gratitude, but which he thought far secondary to the great efforts and magnanimity he had displayed in protecting and preserving the constitution of the country. Others had had the merit of conducting us through wars that threatened our territorial and commercial power; but his right hon. friend had had to encounter a new system of warfare, which, in addition to the objects of all former contests, pointed its hostilities against every acknowledged principle both divine and human. France had attempted to introduce her poisonous principles here, and had tainted the minds of many; clubs were established in secret correspondence

Digitized by Google

with Jacobin societies; and attempts were made in every part of the country, to introduce revolutionary opinions, and weaken the allegiance of the people to the person and government of his majesty. It required no ordinary capacity, no common perseverance and vigour to save the country from destruction under such circumstances; and he had no hesitation in ascribing the preservation of our religion, our laws, and our properties, and the security we now happily enjoy, to the efforts of the late minister; to whom, he believed, we were indebted principally for checking these principles, which would have rendered the crown on the head of his majesty precarious and insecure. It could not be expected that a contest, where we had so much at stake, could have been maintained so long, without considerable sacrifices from the people; but, great as the burthens were which they had to sustain, they had borne them with that fortitude that arose from the sense they entertained of their necessity. Very strong invective had been used against various parts of the conduct of the war; he however was satisfied, as far as the present occasion went, with its successfull issue in effecting the great object of security. He contended that no war in which this country had ever been engaged had contributed to raise the character of the British arms to so high a pitch. Every Englishman would recollect with pride, the naval victories we had achieved, the perseverance and gallantry of every officer and seaman of our fleets, and the skill that had been shown, under the direction of lord Spencer, in continuing, for a period hitherto unexampled, the entire blockade of the enemy's ports, both in the channel and the Mediterranean. He challenged the hon. member to show any one instance, either by sea or land, where, with any thing like an equality of force, the event did not prove honourable to the British arms. We had wrested from the enemy many of her most valuable colonies, thwarted her in many of her most favourite objects, annihilated the whole of her marine, and possessed ourselves of the whole of her commerce, without any loss. These he thought the features of a successful war, and there was no period of it when they were more prominent, or when our prospects were more cheering, than at the time the late ministers went out of office. He could not conceive that, after nine years of expensive war, it was possible for any country to look to a more flattering prospect, either if the war was to be continued, or as affording the materials of honourable and advantageous negotiation. We had just gained a great accession of internal strength by the suppression of the rebellion and a legislative union with Ireland: we had got possession of Malta, and been successful in the Mediterranean. The unjust and unprovoked confederacy of the northern powers had just then opened a new field of brilliant exploit to our naval commanders; and the expedition to Egypt had afforded an opportunity to our army, of which they so gallantly availed themselves, to raise the character of the British arms by land to the same eminence we had acquired on the ocean. The councils that planned these expeditions, that nominated the commanders, that selected the troops, and appointed their separate destinations, were those of his majesty's late servants. Had they miscarried, the public indignation would have been directed towards his right hon. friend; and therefore, particularly at a time when we so liberally dealt out the public praise to every officer engaged in these fortunate exploits, he thought that some portion of our gratitude at least ought to be bestowed on him who would have incurred all the responsibility. —The hon. member had dwelt at much length on the general mismanagement of our finances. He would only entreat the House to look back to the embarrassed and impoverished state of the country at the period when the late chancellor of the exchequer came into office, and contrast it with the prosperous and flattering situation in which he left it. The foundation of this prosperity had been laid by his arrangements in time of peace; and even through the late war they had continued to flourish even beyond what has ever been known in times of the most profound tranquillity. Public credit abroad was only equalled by public confidence at home; and the revenue had increased in so rapid a degree, even during the war, as to exceed the most sanguine calculations of the minister himself, and enabled him, the year before he quitted office, to take credit for 3,300,000*l.* from the excess of the consolidated fund, for the services of the ensuing campaign; a fact, hitherto unknown in the history of finance. He had always, without professing much knowledge on the subject, looked, as criteria of public credit, to the price of

Digitized by Google

the funds, the value of land, and the terms on which the minister was able to raise money for the public service. As to the former, we had seen the stocks gradually rising for the last three years of the war, notwithstanding a rebellion actually raging in the heart of Ireland, and a projected invasion on the part of France: the value of land had never been below 28 years purchase; and no minister had ever borrowed money on terms so advantageous to the country. A stronger proof of the opulence of the country could not be adduced, than that the present minister had been enabled, at the close of this war, by which the hon. member thinks we have been irretrievably ruined, to raise twenty-five millions for the public service, at four per cent and that he had no less than seven different individuals who offered to advance it. Some allusions had been made to the resignation of the late minister: he knew no more about it than others did: he could only bear witness to the general consternation it produced in the country —It was "luctuosum suis, acerbum patriæ, grave bonis omnibus." He did not mean to say that he approved indiscriminately of every act of the late minister, or that every one of his measures answered, to the fullest extent, the public expectations. He did not look for perfection; but he was satisfied that his principles of action were uniformly the same, and that his sole objects were directed to the prosperity of the empire, and the permanent security of the state. He thought that, on the whole, these objects had been pursued with great wisdom and effect, and that his right hon. friend was entitled to the approbation and gratitude of his country. He had been made the sole object of their censure in the motion, and therefore he ought to be the immediate object of their approbation, if the House thought as he did. It was like the case of a general officer, whose conduct had been impeached, who had been brought to a court martial and acquitted. Supposing the army not satisfied with the mere acquittal, but desirous to show some mark of their distinguished approbation, on whom would they bestow it? Surely not on the whole staff, but on the individual alone who was the object of attack. He could have no objection to thank the whole administration, but he thought that the late chancellor of the exchequer ought to be the subject of a distinct separate motion. He should therefore move as an amendment to the amendment of his noble friend, "That the right hon. William Pitt has rendered great and important services to his country, and deserves the gratitude of this House."

The *Speaker* suggested, that this amendment could not possibly be received till the previous amendment should be disposed of.

Mr. *Erskine* said:—Whatever, Sir, may have been the opinion of the House as to the origin of the war, or however your support of the late administration may formerly have been justified, yet I conjure you, by the respect you must bear for the character and honor of this high assembly in all future times, not to give your sanction to a proposition so monstrous as that which the amendment recommends. The very manner in which it originated, is sufficient for its condemnation—If the original motion asserted what was not consistent with the fact, or was subject to objections on any other account, why were they not used by the noble lord as a ground at once for its rejection, instead of making them the pretext of the confounded and fulsome eulogiums we have heard.—The noble lord considers our situation as triumphant—according to him, the vessel of the state, may be taken to be in port with her flags and streamers flying; but even if this were the case, what is it he proposes? Not to praise and thank the men who had brought her into the harbour, but those who, when she was labouring and almost sinking in the tempest, took to the boats and left her for any thing they knew to be dashed to pieces among the rocks. Yet without even the knowledge of any circumstances even to justify their having thus quitted her at so perilous a crisis; without a tittle of evidence to acquit them from censure, we are called upon to cover them with applause. In that navy whose achievements are so justly and deservedly applauded, when a ship is lost after the most notorious exertions for her safety, her officers are nevertheless in all cases, subjected to a court martial for the vindication of their conduct; but those it seems who have taken upon themselves to steer the superior vessel of the state, though it stands admitted that they deserted her even in a crisis of peril are not only not to be brought to trial, but are to have all honors ascribed to them and laurels entwined round their heads. Surely, such a proposition is quite preposterous, and ought not only to be

Digitized by Google

negatived, but reprobated in terms of the most severe reproach. I oppose the motion from no personal animosity to the object of it; I admire the talents of the late minister as much as any man; he has given me no personal offence, and I can have no resentment to gratify. I resist the motion on public principles only, and condemn it if adopted as of the most evil example. I impute no blame to the noble lord for the panegyric you have heard from him; he has given way to the warmth of private friendship, a source of the honestest and purest satisfaction, the best consolation amidst the troubles of this world, but they ought to have no influence without enquiry, or rather against all evidence upon the judgments of men sitting as the representatives of an impoverished and disappointed people.—Let me also conjure you to bear in mind the time when we are called upon to assent to this extraordinary and unprecedented proposition. It is at the conclusion of a disastrous war, not concluded by the object of the motion. Of a war which for nine years and upwards, has shed the blood of our people, and exhausted our national resources. War is at all times an evil of great magnitude, even when justified by the strongest necessity; it is productive (however successful) of consequences so grievous and afflicting to humanity, that its causes and continuance should always be open to the severest scrutiny, but the war in question for which we are to applaud its authors who misconducted it, will neither as to cause or continuance admit of any justification, being begun rashly and without cause, yet continued upon the arrogant claims of "indemnity for the past, and security for the future," neither of which have been obtained, but on the contrary leaving our adversary excluded in resources and in power, whilst near two hundred millions of our money have been expended and the liberties of the subject repeatedly invaded. Yet, with all these grounds for inquiry, or rather for criminal accusation, we are asked on the mere foundation of sounding panegyrics by his friends and supporters, to adopt the amendment that has been proposed.

But, in addition to all these objections, I must now call back your attention to the circumstances under which the late minister thought proper to retire from his majesty's councils. He withdrew suddenly, at a time when, besides all the disastrous circumstances I have adverted to, we were engaged in a dangerous dispute on a subject vital to our commercial system with all the nations of the North, one of which, and the most powerful, was governed by a prince approaching nearly to madness, and whose delirium mainly consisted in an unprovoked and determined hostility to this country.—He retired when France also was leagued with those powers, and when a struggle the most perilous that ever threatened this country, was apparently on the eve of commencing.—This was the season when the late minister, who is to day the theme of such splendid eulogiums, left the helm of the state to all the hostile elements, as I have described them. Yet he and his associates are now to be perfumed with the incense of a grateful country, while those under whose auspices those dark clouds were dispelled, by whose exertions such accumulating dangers were dispersed and surmounted, and under whose management the best safety we could hope for, has been obtained for us, are to be passed by without any monument of national approbation, and even without any notice whatsoever.—There is but one way indeed, in which it could be contended, even as an answer to national accusation, that the late minister had not deserted his duty. It may be said, that particular circumstances disqualified him from ostensibly undertaking the desirable work of peace, and that he only therefore retired for a short season behind the scene, and that though his face was hid from public observation, his comprehensive eye explored all the movements of the political machine—that every thing, in fact, continued under his control; and that the restoration of peace, which was received with so much gratitude throughout the country, was in reality his work. But, supposing this to be probable, has it in fact been established, or has there been any kind of proof upon which we could possibly proceed? The whole of this mysterious transaction, must at all events be cleared up, before I can assent to an acquittal, much less to the Amendment which has been proposed.

But there is another point of view in which this motion is open to the strongest objections. At a time when some of the most prominent members of the late administration, and the most confidential supporters and personal friends of the late minister are publicly condemning and declaiming against the peace, and endea-

Digitized by Google

vouring to persuade the public that it is ruinous and disgraceful, can we who really consider it as a benefit and a blessing, be called upon to cover both him and them with our applauses? Would such a proceeding tend to consolidate the treaty that has at last so happily been concluded? Would it tend to convince the government of France, that we are at last honestly desirous to improve the good understanding which has taken place? But there is still another point of view, in which, if no other objections existed, the amendment must appear to be unfounded. If the peace, as has often and truly been said, is not so favourable to us as might have been wished, to whose misconduct is it to be ascribed? I answer, that it is to be solely ascribed to the late minister, who rejected the repeated offers of the French government when far better terms might have been commanded, and it was under the influence of his power and eloquence in this place that the rejection of these offers were approved of and sanctioned; and am I nevertheless, as an independent member of parliament, to thank that right hon. gentleman for acts deserving of an impeachment, and but that this word has almost lost its signification in this House, I should hope to see the day, when he might be brought to an account.

Let the House besides recollect, that the person whose repeated and more favourable offers of negotiation were rejected, was the same Buonaparté with whom we have now concluded a peace, and with whom the present ministers are disposed, I trust, to maintain the relations of peace—the same Buonaparté whose ambassador is now at our court, and whom, after all our lofty and scornful refusals, we have at length consented to recognise as the lawful head of the government of France—the same Buonaparté whose sincerity we have now acknowledged, and which we had just as little reason formerly to suspect. But there is no end of objections. The particular periods when these disdainful refusals of proffered amity were rejected, were peculiarly favourable for their reception. They were repelled when not a French soldier remained in Italy, whose soil had been traced and retraced by the footsteps of Russians, then the adversaries of France; and when the states of Europe had not fallen into the degraded condition to which they have since been reduced; yet it was in answer to such favourable propositions, that language of the most disgusting description was employed against the first consul of France. It was not only that we refused to treat, but even to listen to any proposition for a treaty;—it was not that we sent back to them objections to their terms of negotiation in diplomatic forms of courtesy, but rebuked them with the most offensive contempt;—and all this, to our shame be it spoken, was within these walls both sanctioned and applauded; but if we could now retrace our steps, is there a man amongst us who would renew them?—I verily believe not. Yet they were the steps in which you followed the late minister, whom we are now called upon to thank for having misled you. But were there even a colour for such a proceeding, the fair way would have been to negative the original motion, instead of resorting to this pompous interpolation: The noble lord has had his introductory "that, &c." to amend the introductory "that, &c." of the hon. baronet; and I too, said Mr. E. might have my "that, &c."—On a loud cry from the Treasury-bench of "Move, Move," Mr. E. said he would move, and moved, "That a Committee be appointed to inquire into the conduct of the late administration:" but as the forms of the House did not allow of its being put, the hon. and learned gentleman withdrew it for the present, and concluded by expressing his dissent to the amendment of the noble lord.

Mr. *Cartwright* said, that a motion of censure having been brought forward upon the conduct of a minister who has rendered his country more service than any former minister ever did, it became that House to pass a personal vote in his favour. He entertained so high an opinion of the services of Mr. Pitt, that he should ever feel grateful to Providence for having given this country so able, so zealous, so honest an advocate, at a time of such unexampled public trial.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, he gave great commendation to the terms in which the noble lord had couched his motion; it did not convey general, vague, and indiscriminate praise, but fixed upon specific advantages which the country had derived from the conduct of the late ministers. By the blessing of Providence, and the efforts of the late ministry, the vessel of the state has been rescued, not only from the waves, but from the hands of the enemy, and had been conducted triumphantly into port. With regard to the

Digitized by Google

strongest ground of argument which the opposite party had chosen, the resignation of the late chancellor of the exchequer, he was happy, for that right hon. gentleman's sake, that this was their strongest ground, for it was as weak as could be imagined. That his remaining in office was accounted by them so essential to the interest of the country, was a high compliment to his talents: yet if he had at any time shown a want of zeal for the interests of his country, he deserved to be censured. But let us attend to the conduct he had pursued since his resignation, and from that we could form the best judgment of the motives which induced him to resign. Let us observe the magnanimity with which he had supported the ministry which succeeded him; the spirited and disinterested manner in which he had come forward to approve the peace which they had made: let us observe the greatness of his mind on these occasions, and then withhold our praise if we could. The merit of the late minister was of the most exalted kind; yet he could not approve of a vote of thanks to him exclusively. He, indeed, as the head of the late administration, gave energy and vigour to the whole; but his measures were all submitted to the rest of the cabinet, and modified and amended by their united wisdom. It was therefore an invidious measure, to return the thanks of the House to one member of the ministry to the exclusion of the rest. There were some parts of the late chancellor of the exchequer's conduct which deserved particular commendation. When others sunk under the prospect of the evils which threatened us, his firm and resolute conduct gave new courage and energy to the country. The merit which ranks next to this is, the public spirit with which he looked forward to the advantage of future ages, in the plans which he formed for the discharge of the burthens of the people. When it was necessary to call forth the energy of the country in its own defence, he did so with an intrepidity beyond all praise: when again the country showed a wish for peace, he was ready to comply with its wishes. When a peace had been concluded by other ministers, after he himself had retired from office, being convinced that the nation wished for peace, and that the terms of the peace were advantageous to the country, he came forward to support that peace.—With regard to the motives which induced him to retire from office, they were honourable and patriotic. Such being the merits of this great man, and such the beneficial consequences which have resulted from the conduct of the late administration, I give my most hearty assent to the amendment of my noble friend.

Sir *Robert Peel* said, that he had the honour to be a member of the commercial world, and had had frequent occasion to transact with the late chancellor of the exchequer, business of great difficulty and importance. From personal knowledge, he was therefore enabled to state, that no minister ever understood so well the commercial interests of the country. He knew that the true sources of its greatness lay in its productive industry, and he therefore encouraged that industry. Circumstances obliged him to lay burthens on the country, but he had first taught the country how to bear those burthens. Large debts were indeed contracted, but they were more than equalled by the increase of wealth arising from his wise measures. It was not unusual for a country to flourish in peace; but where was there another minister to be found, under whose auspices the resources of his country had been doubled in the midst of an expensive and vigorous war? Debts had been contracted; but they were all domestic debts, and the interest was spent among ourselves. Whatever might be said of our burthens, the country, under their pressure, was more flourishing than at any former period. Many things had been urged to show the evils arising from our paper money; but no issue of paper money had been made which we had not funds to support; unlike a neighbouring country, which issued paper money until its value was depreciated almost to nothing. The late minister had been the benefactor of his country, and had neglected no one's interest but his own. It had indeed been said, that though he did not enrich himself, he had secured his influence by bestowing pensions and titles on others. But he had no occasion to have recourse to such arts; he had secured sufficient support by honourable measures; three parts of the House, who were incapable of being bribed, were his friends. When such was the case, the House ought not to content themselves with a bare vote of thanks, but to bestow on him some more solid mark of their approbation. It would be disgraceful to the nation to allow

Digitized by Google

such a man to retire to languish in poverty. He, for one, would be happy to contribute to prevent this; not from any personal motives, but on account of the important services he had rendered his country.

Sir *G. P. Turner* considered the amendment as but a small token of gratitude bestowed on the distinguished person for whom it was intended; but such as it was, he would support it from principle. He assured the House he was in no want of a pension; and if he sought for a peerage, he knew he should not get one. He had supported from principle the measures of the right hon. gentleman, because he was firmly convinced that that gentleman himself had acted from the purest principle. If the war had brought burthens with it, our property had notwithstanding been saved, our constitution unimpaired, our honour not only unsullied but exalted. As a public man, and as a private individual, he merited honours and approbation.

Colonel *Wodehouse* conceived, that to agree to the motion of censure, would be to vote a gross insult on the proceedings of parliament, by whom the late administration had been so honourably seconded. He was glad to offer his tribute of praise to the talents and worth of the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. *Grey* said:—Sir, I know not whether I am called upon by the motion of the noble lord to consider generally the merits of the late administration, and to approve of all the conduct of all the individuals who composed it, or to look only to one right hon. gentleman, on whom exclusively panegyrics have been heaped, and whose superior light is thought to have reflected some small degree of splendor on those who acted along with him. I must observe, that the long string of his admirers who have spoken in his praise have confined themselves to general eulogium and declamation, or to an assumption of facts which it behoved them to approve. This motion is not only unsupported by argument, but insulting to an oppressed people, groaning under the fatal effects of his misconduct. To some parts of it I do not dissent. That we have been highly indebted to the exertions of the army and navy during the late contest, every man must allow. But I think it a little unfair in the noble lord to mix the merits of the late ministers with the merits of our fleets and armies. One hon. gentleman says, that, by means of the late minister, we have gained all that we have not lost; another, that he has raised the country to an unparalleled pitch of prosperity and power; while a third asserts, that to him the king is indebted for his crown. *Non tali auxilio.* The Crown never was in danger, and if it had been, there was a sufficient share of loyalty and good sense in the country to defend it without any assistance from the right hon. gentleman. We are told, that the vessel of the state has outrode the storm, and now rides securely in port. In what does this security consist? Look to France, and see the situation in which we are left. There are not wanting those who affirm that the state, far from being in a port of security, can no longer entertain a hope of safety. Before I believe that we have gained all that we have not lost, I must hear very different arguments. We have now made peace with the French republic. We were called upon to do so at the beginning of the contest. What dangers would the country have known then, to which it is not now exposed? Was the republic more formidable then than at present? But we were afraid of Jacobinism. Is the existing government of France built upon Jacobinism, or is it not? Let those answer who rejected the overtures of Buonaparté, and who justified their conduct in this House. Have we forgotten the position of a right hon. gentleman, that the effect of the success of such an usurpation was a danger too tremendous to be encountered? There are few who will say, that the principles on which the government of Buonaparté is founded are less Jacobinical, than those of the other governments which have sprung up in France since the revolution. Had Robespierre been allowed to consolidate his power, would he have been less safe to be treated with? If he had found it for his interest, would he not have suppressed the clubs, silenced discussion, shackled the press, and, after worshipping the goddess of Reason, installed Christianity in the church of Notre Dame? These things have been done by one of whom such atrocities are related during his campaign in Egypt; and why might not the same line of conduct have been pursued by the other governments of France who have vexed that ill-fated country—ill-fated in having lost its liberty—fortunate in conquest and aggrandizement; but these are poor compensations for being reduced under the yoke of despotism. If peace had been

Digitized by Google

made when France was driven within her ancient boundaries, would the dangers of this country have been greater? An hon. gentleman has given peculiar credit to the late minister for being ready to treat with the enemy as often as a favourable opportunity occurred. But the hon. gentleman did not mention when he was inclined to pacific measures, and when he breathed nothing but defiance. When did he consent to negotiate? In the hour of misfortune. Transient success at all times served to make him reject overtures of accommodation with the most unbounded haughtiness. When lord Malmesbury first went to Paris, Italy had been conquered and Germany overrun. Jourdan was defeated, and the negotiation broke off. What was the state of things when lord Malmesbury went to Lisle? The emperor had been compelled to conclude a separate peace, we were without an ally, and our affairs at home wore the most dismal aspect. Under what circumstances did we again refuse to negociate? The French had been driven out of Italy; Buonaparté was sincere, because peace was his interest; the balance of power had not been for ever destroyed; and the continent of Europe did not lie at the mercy of France.—You would approve of a minister who has behaved with insolence as long as he was successful, and refused to abandon his rash and ruinous projects, except in disappointments and defeat. This resolution is to be passed after we have been forced into a peace such as England never concluded since she held her late high rank among the nations of Europe—a peace to be defended on the score of necessity, but which too clearly proves that this country is precipitated from that pitch of greatness to which the arms and the councils of our ancestors had raised it. I approved of the preliminaries and I would by no means give a vote which would endanger a renewal of the war. But I feel myself strongly inclined to alter my opinion, and my mode of acting, not only by events which have subsequently happened, but by the manner in which the peace is defended. What is the boasted port in which we are now riding securely? France has attained that power and those boundaries which few men in France, at the beginning of the contest, considered more than an idle dream. Her present limits are the Ocean, the Pyrenees, the Rhine, and the Alps. Indeed, she has gone beyond the Alps, and the Italian republic is no longer to be considered but as one of her departments. The gentlemen on the other side of the House tell us we are secure and triumphant! The maritime and commercial advantages which France has gained are not less considerable. I am convinced that the House heard with astonishment the assertion of a noble lord (Hawkesbury), that this peace secured to us a greater naval and commercial superiority than we had ever before enjoyed. The noble lord ought to have a more correct way of estimating these matters than tons of shipping or returns of exports. What are present advantages, unless we have some security for their enjoyment? Were these advantages less considerable before the war began? Consider for a moment, Sir, our prospects if we had remained at peace. Do we owe our superiority to the blood and treasure we have expended, to the taxes with which we are burthened, and to the exhaustion which we feel? I greatly fear that we have given France means to rival us upon the seas, which she never before possessed. With a sea coast from the Texel to Spain; with her ancient ports and new acquisitions in the Mediterranean, can it be doubted that she will become a great naval power? Has she no means of attacking yours? You are excluded from almost the whole continent of Europe; she has cut you out from the coast of Africa; she trades with greater advantages in India; from her formidable new position in America, she makes the United States dependant, and controls the whole of your commerce to the West Indies. Let the noble lord now say that our naval superiority is greater and more firmly established than at any former æra! To prove the fallen state of this country, I have only to appeal to the right hon. gentleman's colleagues in office. Instead of expecting approbation, does it not lie on him to clear his character? He may be innocent; but is not the reduction of a great nation to comparative imbecility and insignificance, *primâ facie* evidence of misconduct, which he and his friends are bound to repel?—All the gentlemen who have spoken have dwelt largely upon the unparalleled difficulties with which the late minister had to contend. Here was the assumption of a fact without any proof. Who ever began a war with such confidence? What minister had ever so few difficulties, in his own estimation, either at home or abroad? If difficulties did arise,

Digitized by Google

he must prove that they were not produced by his own misconduct; and that, without any fault of his, he is obliged to abandon all the objects for which he went to war, although his motto long was—

——"Potuit quæ plurima virtus
Esse fuit; toto certatum est corpore regni."

He had to struggle with financial embarrassments: when our trade was so extensive, when our credit was so high, could these arise without mismanagement? It is possible that they might; but it is too much to ask us, without inquiry and without proof, to believe that they did. Dissention relaxed the efforts of the confederacy, and at last dissolved it. But were not all his measures calculated to produce discord and jealousy? The grand object of the war was, to reduce the power of France, and to compel a government to abdicate which was inconsistent with civil society. When the destruction of a government was sought, what possible good effect could be produced by military operations in the West Indies? The loss of colonies had no effect in diminishing the influence of the rulers of France. The conquest of Martinique being achieved by those who are most dear to me, I must ever reflect on it with pleasure; but this and subsequent successes in that quarter, did not, in the remotest degree, advance the object of the war; the force sent thither was so much detached from that which should have been directed against the heart and vitals of the enemy. Was this the only evil of this selfish and impolitic plan? Could we expect that the confederacy would keep united, when it was seen that we were aiming at the aggrandisement of our own power? Distrust was generated, together with a similar desire of plunder, in all our allies. While we were pursuing schemes of conquest in the West Indies, the emperor attempted to gain a new barrier for himself in the Netherlands, and took possession of Valenciennes in his own name. When we began to struggle for what were called British objects—when an attempt was made by our troops upon Dunkirk, dismay and digrace attended our ill directed efforts. These reverses are solely attributable to the fundamental error in the conduct of the war.—To show the right hon. gentleman's own views of the facility of the task he had undertaken, I would refer the House to his repeated declarations of France being not only on the brink, but in the very gulph of bankruptcy. According to him, her resources were completely exhausted, and she could not keep an army in the field many weeks longer. What must be the noble lord's notion of the difficulties ministers had to encounter, when he talked of marching to Paris? Sir, our situation, for which we are to thank the right hon. gentleman, is such as to justify a peace by far the most dangerous that the British nation ever concluded. The sacrifices which we made by the preliminaries were very great; but many things have happened since which are extremely alarming, and which, had the House and the country then known, their joy would have been greatly damped. The island of Elba has been seized under circumstances which, since we are at peace with France, I forbear to state. Italy has been annexed to France; France has gained possession of Louisiana; and, what I think by no means the least important, by the non-renewal of former treaties we have lost many commercial advantages, and a wide door is opened for future altercation and animosity. The present chancellor of the exchequer said that we could not prevent the usurpations of France, since the emperor did not oppose them. What is this but a confession that England is excluded from the affairs of the continent, and that France may carry on her ambitious schemes without molestation? I was a good deal amused with the right hon. gentleman's assertion, that the island of Elba was ceded to France by a sovereign independent power, and that therefore we had no right to interfere. The late minister, affirmed, that the opening of the Scheldt was such a violation of the rights of nations, that for that alone he would have counselled a war against France. Is the annexation of the island of Elba to be compared, for one instant to the opening of the Scheldt? Yet it is permitted without a struggle; and perhaps we did not even venture to remonstrate. To such a deplorable condition have the councils of the late administration reduced us, that after the preliminaries of peace, we are obliged to consent to a prodigious augmentation of the power of the enemy. When this is the sad result of their measures, we are gravely called upon to hail them as our deliverers. The motion in itself is unprecedented, and a most unseasonable time is chosen to bring it forward. It is now above a year since these gentlemen retired from office, leaving the country in a state of unparal-

Digitized by Google

leled danger; and we have just concluded a peace which we reckon ourselves happy in obtaining, though unattended by security. At such a moment and on such men it is proposed to confer a mark of honour which neither the ministers of queen Anne nor the conductors of the seven years war ever received. We would represent them as having raised higher the glory of the country, and more effectually promoted its prosperity, than a Chatham or a Marlborough! I must hear something very different from what I have yet heard, before I consent to this prostitution of the honours of this House.—As the noble lord's motion is couched in such general terms, of course we must approve of every act of the late administration, their conduct of the war, their behaviour to foreign powers, their negotiations, and their refusals to negociate. See in what inconsistency the House will be involved. The question is between the late and present administration. You have approved of the peace, such as it is; but I ask, whether the disadvantages of that treaty are not in a great measure, to be ascribed to the rejection of Buonaparté's overtures? Is there any man bold enough to affirm, that we might not, in 1800, have obtained terms of comparative honour, power, and security? With the fatal consequences before its eyes, does the House now approve of that rejection? If Louisiana has given France the command of North and South America; if she be mistress of Italy; if the island of Elba forms part of her territory; if she is virtually in possession of Malta (for to talk of the independence of the order is downright trifling), the insolent rejection of Buonaparté's overtures has wrought all these calamities.—A majority of his majesty's cabinet ministers retired last session of parliament; for whether they were dismissed or resigned, is not here worth disputing. For the general policy of their councils we are not to look to the individual sentiments of any particular member, however great his influence. His approbation of the present peace may or may not be a proof of his pacific disposition at a former period, when he talked about "a lucky escape." But the majority of his colleagues have declared the peace disgraceful and ruinous. Four have already openly stated their sentiments; and, if rumour is to be believed, others will embrace the next opportunity to do the same. Therefore they never would have counselled the king to conclude this peace, which the House has so loudly applauded. If the House passes this resolution, it condemns the peace which it formerly approved, and will, I have no doubt, in the course of a very few days again approve. Let me ask you to pause, and to show some regard for your consistency, your dignity, your reputation. The noble lord talked much about the tone of diplomatic transactions. From the insolent tone in which the late administration talked to the enemy, peace must have been for ever unattainable. Their grand object seemed to be, to exasperate the nations, and to render their enmity perpetual. One hon. gentleman stated, that the war had been generally successful, and that there had been no failure where British troops were equal in numbers to their opponents. Has the hon. gentleman forgotten the repeated motions made from this side of the House upon repeated failures? Has the hon. gentleman forgotten the attempt upon Dunkirk, where we yielded to inferior numbers? Has he forgotten the fatal and disgraceful expedition to Holland, where a British army was obliged to capitulate to an inferior force? We were told that a powerful diversion was effected. I have always understood that the object of a diversion was to employ a larger by a smaller force. But a more numerous British army than the duke of Marlborough ever commanded was here coopd up by these men whom we are going to thank, without an opportunity to promote the cause of their country. I would wish the hon. gentleman to recollect the expeditions against Ferrol and Cadiz, and the history of the armament meant to assist the Austrians in Italy, but which did not reach the Mediterranean till the fate of Europe had been decided in the plains of Marengo, and which, but for an accident, would have sailed into the port of Genoa, then in possession of the French. No man contemplates with greater exultation than myself the last campaign in Egypt. The troops of no nation ever gained greater glory. But, far from this success being to the credit of the late ministers, they deserve censure and punishment for having exposed these brave men to dangers too great in the ordinary course of human events to be encountered with the smallest hope of victory. Our troops were victorious chiefly from their own discipline, skill, and heroism; but in no considerable degree from the misconduct of the enemy. If any doubt is enter-

Digitized by Google

tained of the criminality of ministers in sending out this expedition, let an inquiry be instituted, and I engage to make good the charge at your bar.—Now, Sir, let me be permitted to offer a few observations on the financial state of the country which the right hon. gentleman is praised for having so considerably improved. The financial talents and knowledge of that right hon. gentleman I am perfectly ready to admit. I do not, however, hesitate to declare, that his rash and desperate attempts at innovation in finance have involved the country in greater difficulties in that respect than it has ever been entangled in at any former period. Into this subject I had on a former occasion attempted to persuade the House to institute an inquiry; but my motion was objected to, as of too general a nature; yet my endeavour went no farther than to give an opening to a committee to inquire into the financial transactions of the right hon. gentleman. If that motion was justly objected to as too general, how much more objectionable is the present motion, which goes to give a lumping vote of praise to the general administration of the right hon. gentleman, and that without any previous inquiry, and upon the result of a single debate! But, what is there that deserves the thanks of this House in his financial exertions? Is he to be thanked for having more than doubled the national debt, and for having expended, during the late war, more than was expended during the wars of Queen Anne, king William, &c. nay, all the wars since the Revolution? Is this the proof of the financial prosperity in which the right hon. gentleman has placed the country? The hon. baronet has concurred in one censure, at least, of the financial conduct of his right hon. friend, namely, the remittance to the emperor without the consent of parliament. The hon. baronet has also lamented, and expressed his uneasiness respecting the restrictions on the Bank, a measure which is generally acknowledged to be inconsistent with the true principles of credit. By whose misconduct was that misfortune brought upon the country? To whom was it to be ascribed, in the opinion of the directors and governor of the Bank. The report of the committee told the House that it was imputable to the failure of the right hon. gentleman to make good the debt due by government to the Bank. The restrictions on the Bank also gave rise to almost all the forgeries for which so many daily fall victims to the law. Even now, after the vessel of the state has triumphantly entered the port of security, it is deemed unsafe to take off this restriction, neither is there any reason to expect that it will soon be taken off. Here, then, is another financial measure, the result of the right hon. gentleman's contrivance, which does not call for a vote of thanks. But perhaps the income tax will atone for any thing blamable in the former measure! Surely there never was proposed a tax more repugnant to the spirit of a free constitution. But what is become of that tax? Is it not now to be added to the permanent debt of the country? For have the terms of the loan been strictly adhered to? But his great financial merit is no doubt built on his plan of the sinking fund, and his adherence to that system! Has not the spirit of that plan been wholly abandoned, or at least considerably impaired, during the present session, and that with the advice of the right hon. gentleman? Can the public now derive any advantage from that plan? and is not the burthen transferred from the present House of Commons, and imposed on posterity? Here, then, are specific objections against the financial merits of the right hon. gentleman, in which, however, his strong hold is supposed to consist. And should not the House, therefore, pause before they proceeded to an unqualified vote of praise on his general administration? But the right hon. gentleman kept up the funds: is the glory or the prosperity of the country to be measured by the depression or rise of the 3 per cents? On this subject I would beg the House to recollect the observations of Mr. Hume on the reigns of Charles and James 2nd. I would also wish them to recollect what was formerly the wealth and commercial prosperity of Holland. They will then, perhaps, be inclined to look for better criteria of the security and honour of a nation than the mere price of stocks. States may, perhaps, be compared to patients who labour under certain disorders—they wear, indeed, the complexion and flush of health, but an internal decay preys upon their vitals. That the right hon. gentleman possesses great talents, no man is readier to acknowledge than I am: his eloquence, his dexterity at debate, may be unrivalled; but his talents are rather showy than solid, and better calculated to defend bad, than to

Digitized by Google

produce good measures: his government was most iniquitous and oppressive in many respects, and utterly destitute of true policy. Viewing it as I do, in that light, it is impossible for me to assent to the amendment.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that he felt himself called upon to state the grounds on which he should give his vote for the motion of his noble friend; but before he entered on the general arguments of the hon. gentleman, he could not help adverting to that part of his speech which related to his noble friend's making that motion, which motion he would assert arose out of another motion, which had been made by an hon. baronet (sir F. Burdett), who on that occasion moved, in substance, a censure upon the late administration; and the present motion became still more necessary, as it arose out of a speech made by that hon. baronet previous to his motion; for, after an attack so pointedly made on his right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt), it was due to him who had been for so many years the minister of this country, it was due to the House which had for so many years given him their support, not to suffer the motion made by the hon. baronet, and the speech which preceded it, to pass over with a mere negative, but to institute a parliamentary proceeding, stating the reverse of such motion, which could not be done without expressing the approbation of that House of the conduct of his right hon. friend and colleagues throughout the arduous struggle in which they had been engaged.—The hon. gentleman had adverted to the subject of the war which was just concluded, and had mixed with his observations upon that subject some comments upon the treaty of peace. In the general view of things, it was perfectly fair for him so to do. On the subject of the war, the hon. gentleman, however, and others who had taken the same mode of argument on former occasions, had made a mistake in the character of the war, and the mode of considering it; they had considered the contest which we had just concluded as that of an ordinary war; such as a war for general principles of national interest—a general balance of power—or for the purpose of resisting the aggrandizement of a rival power. It was in no such view that the war we had just concluded ought to be considered. This war tended to bring about a revolution in the manners of men, and had its foundation in principles totally different from any other war in which this country was engaged. It was different in its moral effect, as introducing principles which threatened to overturn the moral principles of every other power in Europe. But the hon. gentleman had asserted, that in this war we were the aggressors. Now, by every party that had succeeded in France, it had been acknowledged, that France had been the aggressor. He did not deny, that in some of the provisional executive governments, there might be persons desirous of avoiding a war with this country; but the National Convention had determined upon war; and it was impossible for any provisional executive in France, with such a disposition in the Convention, to avert that calamity. The war arose from necessity, from the principles that were prevalent in France previous to its commencement, disposed as France was to receive the seditious of every country; publishing, as it had, principles utterly subversive of all order, destructive of all property, of all moral obligation, of every thing that was dear to man; with such a country, professing and publishing such principles, it was impossible to be long at peace. The war was a calamity, in such circumstances, that was unavoidable. But the hon. gentleman asked, whether the ground of argument, on Jacobin principles, did not now exist, in the same force and degree, against the government of France, as it did when this country first opposed it on that account? To which he would answer, that Jacobin principles not only did not exist in the same force and degree; but, in the way in which the hon. gentleman stated that matter, they did not exist at all. The hon. gentleman had asked, if Jacobin principles did not give birth to the present government of France? That was not the mode of considering the question; it was not material to consider what gave birth to the present government—the question to us was, what were its professions now? And, in that respect, there had been a complete change in the government of France. The present government of France had published to the world a recantation of every principle of Jacobinism, and of every other principle from which danger was apprehended, in a manner as satisfactory, as far as professions could be such, as the most decided enemy of Jacobin principles could desire. However he might regret the fate of the house of Bourbon, without considering

Digitized by Google

whether that house was likely to be restored or not in the course of the war, yet, if it had been for nothing more than a change of the dynasty, the contest would not have been carried on; but the contest here was owing to the entire change of principles upon which the government had been carried on; all principles of established governments had been overturned, and it would have been at any time sufficient ground for other countries to adopt measures for the resistance of such principles, as being utterly hostile to all government whatever, they being in their nature calculated to overturn all constituted authorities; and they had been declared incapable of maintaining peace and amity with other powers, not because they were a republic, but because they were a government, the like of which never before existed, on which no republic even was ever formed, proceeding upon a system that was truly subversive of every maxim and every rule of action that had hitherto been found to contribute to the happiness of mankind. He might be asked, however, what he thought of the recantation which had been made of those principles, and whether he thought they gave evidence of recurrence to ancient principles? To which he answered, he was aware that whatever would be the desire of persons in France, after such a conclusion, it would be impossible for them to set up an establishment upon the best of models, for they must take their materials as they found them. In the mean time, he thought credit was due to their profession, as far as it ought to be respected by foreign powers; for they had publicly asked pardon of God and man, and had done every thing they could to revert to the ancient established principles of government; and their measures, in every point he had been able to view them, had that tendency. He thought it an important consideration, with reference to this peace, or to any peace that could be concluded, when some of the objections which had been started to the peace were removed; and it was then a question, if no credit were to be given to these recantations, how far it would be prudent in this country to drive them again to revolutionary measures, where they must abandon the system which they had now adopted, and proceed in the very same course which rendered them incapable of maintaining peace and amity with other powers.—He was now come to that part of the argument in which the hon. gentleman had asked, what period of the war it was, at which we might not have had more advantageous terms of peace than the present? To which he again answered, that he desired the hon. gentleman to show any period, from the commencement of the war to January, 1800, in which we had any chance whatever of any peace. The hon. gentleman had complained, that no proposition came from us at any time for peace, when we ourselves, or our allies, had been successful; but that our attempts at negotiating were always in the hour of our distress. The hon. gentleman had forgotten that a proposition to negotiate had been made by the late chancellor of the exchequer, at Basle, which was at a period when the Austrians had been successful. He was not now stating, whether government was right or wrong as to the terms which were insisted upon; but he was stating, in answer to the objections of the hon. gentleman, for the purpose of showing, that no peace could be made with France at that period; and it was not a question of terms, but of principle, which principle was, on the part of France, to make no peace at all; and he had no difficulty in saying, that had there been no alteration in that principle, it would have been impossible for this country to have succeeded in negotiating in any manner whatever.—The noble lord then took a view of the observations of the hon. gentleman on the subject of the negotiation in 1800, and maintained, that it was not probable we should have had better terms at that time than the present; the French being then in possession of various places which he enumerated, Genoa, Malta, Egypt, &c. and which they afterwards lost by the fate of war. He observed also, that Austria and Russia were at that time willing to continue the confederacy, and to prosecute the war, and contended that there was at that time a chance of improving the condition of Europe by its continuance, and therefore it was prudent in us to decline the proposals which were then made; besides which, it was to be remembered, that France had gone on in a ten-years revolutionary career, and had had ten revolutions in that time; so that there was no reliance to be placed on the stability of its government. Having stated this much upon the circumstance of the different negotiations proposed at that period; being satisfied that the war arose out of the moral effect of the French re-

Digitized by Google

volution; that no human prudence could have prevented it; being sure that, from the commencement of the war to January, 1800, there never was an option given to this country as to war or peace—he would admit, that in January, 1800, there was stated a different ground; but still it did not follow that it might not have been prudent to prefer the chances of war to the chances of peace.—He should now come, in its order, to consider the conduct of the war; but before he did this, he would say a few words on the observations which the hon. gentleman had made on the definitive treaty of peace. He certainly felt that, upon that subject, there was not the satisfaction or the security to Europe that could have been wished, or might have been once expected; but it did not thence follow, that any blame was imputable to the late ministers for their conduct in the management of the war, nor did it follow that there was any blame imputable to the present ministers for the conclusion of peace. The question of war or peace could only be decided by looking at the alternative of peace or war, by looking at the advantages and disadvantages of both, and making a choice between them; and he did think, that whatever might be the security of Europe at this time, there was, at the time of making peace, no chance whatever of Europe being placed in a better state of security, by this country refusing to make peace. He thought the peace, under all the circumstances, wise, not only for our own security, but for the security of the rest of Europe; for it was the interest of all Europe that we should husband our resources, and not waste our strength upon that pursuit which, under all the circumstances of the contest, was not likely to be very useful, either to Great Britain or the rest of Europe. He thought the state of Europe was not so secure as could have been desired; but when he came to think of the advantages and disadvantages of peace and war, and compared them together, there was no doubt remaining with him as to the course which this country ought to pursue. Now, as to the relative or comparative situation of this country and France, he was prepared to maintain, that there never was a period in which the maritime, commercial, and colonial strength of Great Britain, when compared with that of France, was so great as at the present moment. The hon. gentleman had gone into the conduct of the war, and had enumerated what he considered failures; and certainly some events deserved that name, for certain expeditions had failed of their intended objects. But when expeditions were undertaken, they must be so under considerations of success and of failure; for among the wisest expeditions ever attempted, there must be some failures; but, as far as regarded the separate conduct of this country, there never was a war which was more eminently successful. He believed this was the first war in which no British colony had been wrested from the British crown; where we were so triumphant in every quarter where the British force had been separately employed. If we looked at the result of the efforts of British force, when separately exerted, there never was a war so brilliant as this had been to Great Britain. As to the other powers, he should not at present say much; but if the conduct of any administration was to be tried in the course of a great war, it was not fair to try them on those exertions which they had not the whole conduct of themselves, but in which their efforts were in conjunction with others; and yet it would appear, that, even in this view of the matter, if other powers had been as true to themselves as we had been to ourselves and to them, there would have been less failure than there had been, and no fault was to be imputed to the government of this country on that account—The hon. gentleman had adverted to the financial state of the country in the course of the present war, and to the conduct of his right hon. friend, in that part of the war in which he should have expected he would have met with the approbation of every man in this country, that of adhering to the system which had been adopted for the reduction of the national debt. The hon. gentleman had said, that by this war the national debt had been doubled; that might be true; but the national debt had been doubled by every war since the Revolution. But when the nature of that debt, and of the taxes laid on, was considered, there would be found no blame imputable to his right hon. friend, unless they could show that the war could have been conducted with less expense than it had been; on the contrary, he considered this as a proof of the merit of his right hon. friend, not because the debt was so great (that was matter of regret to him and to every body), but because the bur-

Digitized by Google

thens to support this debt had been so laid on as to affect in a slight degree only the commerce, the prosperity, the comfort, and the domestic happiness of the people of this country. With regard to the sinking fund, he was surprised that the hon. gentleman should have detracted from the merit of his right hon. friend in that particular. The plan for that purpose was wise; but it was not the wisdom of the plan that he so much admired, although that was great, as the determination to persevere in it under all the circumstances of the most extraordinary war. His right hon. friend had the merit of adopting, and of adhering to, the system by which the whole debt now standing against us would be annihilated in half the time that it had been accumulating, from its commencement to the present time.—Whether the war was necessary or not, was a question which he need not now argue; it had been often decided by that House; and he believed that at this moment nine-tenths of the country were not only of opinion that the war was just and necessary, but that the internal peace of the country would not have been preserved, nor could we have been able to contend with the difficulties which the French revolution imposed on us, if these measures had not been adopted. The noble lord then proceeded to take a view of the union between Great Britain and Ireland, which made an important feature of the administration of his right hon. friend, and for which he deserved the highest commendations; which had already produced many good effects, but which posterity would regard with admiration, astonishment, and gratitude to its authors. Under these circumstances, he felt himself called upon to agree to the amendment proposed by his noble friend.

Mr. *Wellesley Pole* supported the amendment, and praised the conduct adopted by the late minister with respect to Ireland, which he maintained had been freed from her foreign and domestic enemies by his vigilance and wisdom. He descanted on the vast commercial advantages accumulated by the prudent measures of the late administration, and concluded with stating that they were justly entitled to the thanks of the House.

Mr. *Fox* said:—Sir, I confess I had some reasons for wishing to delay offering myself to your notice till a late period of the debate: not that I might enter upon the discussion with more advantage after hearing the arguments of those who might precede me, but that, by rising at an advanced period of the debate, I might know with more correctness and certainty what line I had to pursue. Sir, the grounds that have been laid down are of three kinds; and first, though the orders of the House admit of such an amendment as the present being entertained, yet I conceive it to be one of the most irregular, unfair, extraordinary, and unjustifiable proceedings that ever was adopted. Why did not the noble lord follow the usual mode of giving a direct negative to the motion? Has he evinced much dexterity by a contrary line of conduct? The object was, to persuade the House to approve of the late administration. To do that directly and boldly, after the events that have occurred, and the situation in which the country has been placed, was felt to be something too strong. The noble lord was first induced by the observations that were made a short time ago by a worthy baronet (sir F. Burdett). That the House had not been famous for acceding to inquiries he well knew; but he thought of a better mode. An hon. gentleman had given notice of a motion for a vote of censure upon Mr. Pitt by name. This was an opportunity which the noble lord availed himself of to make a motion of a diametrically contrary tendency. Yet still he felt that direct praise might not be agreeable. When, therefore, it was proposed to censure Mr. Pitt by name, then does the noble lord propose to pass a vote of praise upon his majesty's councils. The motion, however, is more general still: he connects with his approbation of his majesty's councils, approbation of the conduct of this House, and of the army and navy. Now, Sir, upon the conduct both of the army and navy, we have passed many a specific vote, and the noble lord knew he was treading upon popular ground. But he goes farther yet, and includes in his motion, applause of the conduct of the people of Great Britain. This is the most unusual proceeding I ever heard of. He says, you, the army have done your duty; you, the navy; and you, the Commons; and you, the people of England, are above all praise in supporting us. Now, Sir, it has been usual, when we have moved to thank any particular person, that that person should retire; whether it would not, in the present case, be decent for us all to retire, I know not,

Digitized by Google

but really, the noble lord has made a general lumping dish of praise, of which we have no example. The original motion introduced by an hon. gentleman near me, very ably, certainly, in many of its points; but I own I am not tempted to agree with him in all. First of all, Sir, I should not consent to thank his majesty for dismissing Mr. Pitt, before I knew whether he did dismiss him or not. Again, I should not consent to thank him, before I was informed upon what grounds he dismissed him. What those grounds were I certainly have not the means of knowing; but we have reason to believe, that he and his colleagues retiring was occasioned by their wishes to do something that had a tendency to emancipate, and assimilate the situation of the Catholics of Ireland more to that of the Protestants, than it is at present. I use the word emancipation, because it has been generally used in speaking upon this subject. These wishes were opposed, and they took the honourable part of resigning their situations. Sir, if that was the real cause of the right hon. gentleman's resignation, it has my unqualified approbation. I should say, that "nothing in his administration became him like the leaving it." Sir, I think I know myself well enough to say, that I am not influenced by any spirit of ancient rivalship; but I must add, that whatever praise the right hon. gentleman deserved for the cause of his resignation, he has forfeited it all by subsequent events. If he thought that it was a great cause, agreeable to the principles of humanity, and necessary to the prosperity of the country, why then I am of opinion, that when he retired upon such an occasion he ought to have come to parliament and have declared his motives. If any strong bias existed, as we have been told, against the question of Catholic emancipation, we should have seen and known it after the subject had been stated to both Houses. If I am answered, that, though the object desired to be attained was a good one, it could only be good if done by government, I reply, that that was no reason for its not being tried. Had the minister come openly and honourably to this House, and said, "such and such is my opinion and my motives," and have said also, "whoever succeeds me must be responsible for the consequences that ensue," I think we should have carried the question; but at least we should have known the fact. Sir, I have no grounds for deciding whether this was the real cause of Mr. Pitt's resignation or only the pretext; but I think I have sufficient foundation for believing, that the principle had not taken very deep root in his mind. I therefore, for one, should be against voting an address to his majesty upon the subject. —We come now to the second point. That the present ministers have done a great service to the country by giving us peace, I admit: but, however we may approve of the peace generally, still the terms upon which it was made must be defended by the state of the country as it was left by their predecessors; and, *vice versa*, the defence of the former ministers must be derived from a condemnation of the terms of the peace, and of their successors. I say, that the present ministers must defend themselves upon the situation to which their predecessors had reduced the country, the late ministers must defend themselves by condemning the measures and the peace made by the present ones; and to do them justice, they have all, except Mr. Pitt, adopted this manly ground. The late secretary for foreign affairs, lord Grenville, is a man of whose conduct I grievously disapprove, particularly that part of it which related to the answer returned to the first overture of Buonaparte; but no one will say that that noble lord is not a man of great abilities and a manly character. Lord Grenville, I repeat, takes his stand upon this point. He says, not as the Jacobins state, that the peace was rendered necessary by the situation in which the country was left by the late ministers, nor as the half Jacobins assert, that the peace was suitable to circumstances; but he says, "we would not have made peace upon such terms; the country was not reduced to such a state as to render it necessary to accede to them; we would have continued the war, and we are confident that our resources would have accomplished the objects we had in view." Lord Grenville, then, has taken the only manly ground. It is on this principle that that noble lord, Mr. Windham, and earl Spencer, have justified themselves. I have heard that the late lord chancellor has done something like it. With respect to the right hon. gentleman to whom the conduct of the war was more immediately entrusted (Mr. Dundas), he has so seldom favoured us with his company this session (a reproach that, to be sure, comes whimsically enough from me), that we are not so-

Digitized by Google

quainted with his opinion. These gentlemen adopt at least a manly style of proceeding. Yet the vote of praise now moved applies to them as well as to Mr. Pitt. The noble lord seems to pass over them in a general way. He says, there were others certainly in very responsible situations, but Mr. Pitt must be considered as the principal. Now, Sir, however that may be, the names of lord Grenville, Mr. Windham, and lord Spencer, can never be considered as mere stop-gaps. Such a doctrine would be strange upon any occasion, but it would be particularly so in the present case. We cannot guess what the opinions of lord Grenville are from Mr. Pitt, nor what Mr. Pitt's are from lord Grenville. Nay we know now that they must have been at constant variance. These are the true grounds; but are they political grounds for saying that it is desirable to lump them all together in one general vote of praise? There is indeed great generosity in the proceeding. These gentlemen come, day after day, and move for papers; they produce daily discussions, and they are complained of as going farther than ever we did, though it is not meant to be said that their opposition is factious. Now, Sir, we think it a little hard that we should not be put under the same cover as they are, and that we should have that epithet applied to us which is not imputed to them, though they are accused of going farther than ever we did. At length, however, comes this whimsical interruption. You say to them, only desist from accusing us for a few minutes, while we are thanking you [A laugh]. Sir, what are we to take into our consideration? We are to view the late administration in the aggregate; we are to ascertain the result and the effects of their measures—to contemplate the country as they found it, and as they left it. In 1792, France, says the noble lord, was the aggressor. This position I shall always deny. France declared war first, but it does not follow, that that power which declares war first must of necessity be the aggressor. If the anecdotes mentioned by the noble lord be true, still I contend that you were the aggressors, because you did not adopt the regular means enforced by the law of nations, of putting an end to your differences by negotiation. But, grant that France was the aggressor. Well, Sir, in 1792, war was declared. It is a long period to go back to; but let us consider a little the circumstances of those times. The same dextrous attempts were made then as have been made this night, to reconcile principles and people of the most opposite description. Now, Sir, how has the war been conducted as a war intended to destroy the French government? We say to the French, if you take Holland we shall take Martinique, and so on in the way of capture for capture; but how will this destroy the French government? You might have had for the attainment of that object the assistance of Frenchmen themselves. I do not mean merely of emigrants, but of Vendeans and royalists; but how could you expect their assistance, when you took such pains to show them that your object was not their interest, but to rob and destroy the French territory, and to parcel it out among you and your friends? In the first campaign you took Valenciennes for the emperor. You took Dunkirk for yourselves. That, you said, was a British object, and therefore it was taken possession of in the name of Great Britain. But is this all? No. Lest there should be a doubt with respect to your views, when you take Valenciennes, the garrison of which, it is known, as well as that of Dunkirk, surrendered by capitulation, you stipulate, that they shall not serve against yourselves, Prussia, or Austria; but you do not stipulate that they shall not serve against the Vendeans. Here you give up your friends in La Vendee, and show yourselves perfectly indifferent to their fate; and the result actually is, that these garrisons are sent into La Vendée, and the troops previously serving there are withdrawn, But the noble lord says, that though Jacobinism be not destroyed in France, yet the war has had the effect of substituting a better government in its stead. Was it, then, the English arms that destroyed the Brissotines, the Robespierres, and the various other successive factions of France, and introduced the government of Buonaparté upon the extinction of the directories? I contend, on the contrary, that the reign of that horrible monster Robespierre, was prolonged by the war. For when you so plainly showed your designs against France, you cooled the ardour of every Frenchman in your cause, you made him resign himself blindly to his fate, and rally round the government of his country, rather than assist those whose sole object was so plainly avowed to be its de-

Digitized by Google

struction. We are told that the ways of Providence are inscrutable, and that it is vain to attempt to penetrate the mysteries of fortune. No man, it must be confessed, ever enjoyed a greater share of fortune than Buonaparte, so much indeed, that there have been times when he would have been called the favourite of the Gods; but, wonderful as his fortune is allowed to be, what should we think of it, if he should show that, for nine years past, the English have been fighting for his government, and spending their blood and treasure for its promotion; that it is not their blindness and obstinacy that have served him, but that they are the willing instruments of his power, and that they take credit for their intentions and successful endeavours to raise him to his throne. The noble lord has said, that no peace with France of any description could be had by any possibility before the year 1800. Now, it is well known, that so early as 1793, Maret was here endeavouring to negociate a peace, which would have included Holland, Belgium, and Savoy. What is our situation now? As to Belgium, so far from saving it, I do not believe that any attempt even to mention its name has been made in any late negotiation. Holland and Spain are both dependent upon France; the Cisalpine republic is more closely connected with her; Switzerland and Genoa still closer; Etruria is nearly in the same state; and she has obtained the complete boundary of the Rhine. It was reckoned scarcely a pardonable extravagance in a young prince, flushed with victory and in his first conquest, to boast that he would have no boundaries for France, except the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees. It was very true, these were not her precise boundaries at present, but, looking to what she had gained on the side of the Baltic, it could not be said that they were less comprehensive. Now, on the head of security, are we to be told, that, by the single difference of the person, we are in less danger at present than we were at any previous period of the war? I should certainly prefer Robespierre to Buonaparte, as a person less formidable from his talents; but if, in addition to the superior talents of Buonaparté I am also to take into account all the other differences between them arising from the great extent of his power, and the increased influence and dominions of the republic. I contend that at no period have we been less secure against the power of France. Next comes the question of Jacobin principles. Upon this subject an hon. member says that Jacobin principles not having taken deep root in England, they have been cured here by the war; but that in Ireland, where they were inveterate, they have been cured by the peace. Now, the reason, I believe, is this: I believe that they existed in Ireland, and, therefore, were cured by the peace; but here, they did not exist at all, and, therefore, here the war could not cure them. But admitting that they did exist in England in some degree, and in Ireland in the extreme, what is the inference to be drawn from the hon. gentleman's statement? Why, that peace is the fit remedy; for if it cured the greater, surely it must be an adequate remedy for the lesser evil? I desire to know how war will prevent Jacobin principles? People sitting under easy taxes and living in comfort, are not likely to be seduced into resistance to the government. But war neither produces domestic comfort nor light taxes. The noble lord talks also of the resignation of the people; it is a phrase of very ambiguous meaning. If by the resignation of the people it is to be understood that they are resigned to the will of of God, and those accidents and calamities to which human nature is liable, I admire this disposition of their minds; but if I am to understand, that they have quietly resigned themselves to all the calamities of a war during its continuance, and rejoice the moment that they have got rid of it, that is not the character I wish of my countrymen. The noble lord then goes on to say, that they have not only acted with resignation, but with disinterestedness. This is another phrase that may admit of many interpretations. If by disinterestedness be meant a total neglect of their own interest, I do not commend it; if it mean the preference of the interest of others to their own, it may be laudable, according to the circumstances; but what has been the disinterestedness of the people in the late war? They have reduced themselves to want, and stripped themselves of their comforts, for no object. If it be for this conduct that they are commended, I do not much approve the epithet. If they have been, under such circumstances, so disinterested as not to listen to a Jacobin seducer, surely they would listen still less to him if they were free from heavy taxes,

Digitized by Google

and in the full enjoyments of those comforts which the war abridged. How war prevents Jacobins, then, is beyond my comprehension. But this, we are told, was a war in defence of the constitution, and, therefore, not an ordinary war. Now, I want to know, what war, since that concluded by the peace at Ryswick, down to the present day, except the seven years war, has not been directed against the English government? This was the case in the duke of Marlborough's war. It was so in the war accompanying the rebellion in 1745. In short, that has been the nature of all the wars with France. To this it is answered, that those wars were mere trifles, compared with the war which is just terminated. This is the way in which orators and statesmen always talk of the present time. Were then tyranny, popery, and the destruction of the constitution, as carried on in the system which prevailed in the four reigns of the Stuarts, were these mere trifles? The fact is, they are all the same. The evil of the present time is always considered the greatest, and every minister resists it by all the means in his power. Now, with respect to any who may have acted upon French principles, though I doubt whether there really be such persons, the number, it seems, is very elastic. Mr. Burke has stated them at so many thousands, I believe 80,000. and again I find, when it answers the purpose, they are represented only as a few, without credit, influence, or zeal. Admitting, however, that there are such persons, I have a right to presume that they are few, as the number taken up is exceedingly small, and those who have been legally charged as such have been fewer. To this it may be objected, that the number is nothing: and that there are other things more material to be taken into the account. I admit that the duke of Monmouth, and one or two persons of great consequence, would, by their great influence outweigh numbers; but of what description are the persons who have been taken up as Jacobins in this country during the late war? So far from being persons of influence, it has been made matter of ridicule to suppose that they could be affected by the new taxes, considering them as a set of people totally destitute of property. You have among them Mr. Jones, Mr. Bonner, and others; and for these Mr. Pitt is to have a civic crown, as if he had destroyed so many Catilines. It is surely absurd to attach such importance to such individuals, and to say that the conduct of such men as the duke of Ormond and sir W. Windham, a man of the greatest talents and influence of his time, when acting in concert with the Pretender to overthrow the constitution and government, was a slight danger.—Again it was said, that the more poor, the more dangerous; because, the more destitute of property themselves, the more ready to destroy it. But it was well known, that influence accompanies property, and that it was thus the duke of Orleans had so great an influence in bringing about the revolution in France.—If the numbers were very great, if they amounted to half of the population of the country, Mr. Fox said, he would be ready to admit them to be dangerous, however destitute of property; but when we were told from judicial authority, that they were few in number, and without zeal or ardour in the cause, he could not consider them as formidable. So far, then, for the great merit of the late ministers, in resisting the force and power of Jacobins. We are told next, that, under their direction, we have withstood the torrent of jacobinism, which has destroyed every other country in Europe. Now look at Holland; the revolution was produced there by the aristocratic party, in opposition to the Stadtholder. I shall not, however, dwell upon Holland; you may take it; Switzerland, and Italy also. But look at the king of Prussia; has Prussia been revolutionized? Is there a Directory at Berlin, or Magdebourg; or have the kingdoms of Austria and Russia been changed into republics?—Mr. Fox proceeded to shew that thanks could not be given to the late ministers jointly, as Mr. Pitt and lord Grenville now maintained such opposite opinions respecting the peace. The one or the other must have been acting wrong with regard to the war when they were in the cabinet. Who would thank lord Grenville for his answer to Buonaparté's first overtures? No one had justified it, and he would venture to say it had been read all over Europe with disgust. If the House went into a committee, these points must be decided; but the present general vote avoided this difficulty, by voting thanks, without inquiry, in the lump. Should they be thanked for expelling the French from Egypt? They shut the French up in Egypt, and compelled them to keep

Digitized by Google

possession of it, in defiance of the proceedings of a brave and gallant officer, sir Sidney Smith, who negotiated for their evacuation. Were they to be thanked for rejecting Buonaparté's overtures, because he had not given a proof of his power? They rejected them because they would not desert their allies; and they pleaded in apology, that they made peace because their allies deserted them. They should have known, that at the time they rejected these overtures, the allies were not to be relied upon. Ministers were answerable for the alliances they formed. They contended that all their plans had succeeded; their means had succeeded, but they had failed in their ends, because their means were not applicable to their ends. Mr. Pitt was praised for his skill in finance. Mr. Fox acknowledged his quickness, but doubted his judgment respecting our resources. He always approved his plan of the sinking fund, but thought it extraordinary and absurd to praise him for persevering in a plan of his own found successful. He never could call a man a great financier who proposed the income tax, an impost against all principle of taxation; it was, in fact, a confiscation of property. If the late and present chancellor of the exchequer were not on such a friendly footing, there would be a danger of their quarrelling about the 56 millions for which the income tax was pledged; the one would not allow it to be a part of our permanent debt; the other made it so.—Mr. Fox reviewed Mr. Pitt's conduct in the stoppage of the Bank, and censured it; but the most important object was the constitution. He should ever remain of opinion, that liberty was the fundamental cause of all our greatness. He would not say, that no occasions could occur for suspending it; but those who conceived themselves aggrieved and imprisoned, should be left the means of redress. A precedent was set of suspending our liberties, which rendered them of small value. He compared the ground of alarm and the cause of suspension, with the cause of alarm in the rebellion in 1745; and showed that the danger of the present day was nothing like that of the former time, when persons of real property and influence were engaged against the state. Now, no persons of property or influence had conspired, but harsher measures had been taken than in former times, when the danger was real. It had been said, the ground of alarm in Ireland was great; it was so. Here Mr. Fox contrasted the conduct of ministers, who made war to extinguish jacobin principles in England, where he said they did not exist to a dangerous extent, with their now boasting that peace had extinguished jacobin principles in Ireland, where the danger was really great. He condemned the use of the torture in Ireland, as worse than any thing in the conduct of Robespierre. He again touched on the war, and said this reign had been remarkable for two wars, in the objects of both of which we had failed; by the one we lost America; by the other we have overthrown the balance of Europe, which we pretended it was our wish to preserve. And how preserve? By overthrowing France, which formed so great a part of that balance.—He then reviewed the different periods at which we might have made peace, and showed, that the longer it was delayed, the worse the terms necessarily became. We would not make peace when France was "in the gulf of bankruptcy," and we were not "scratched" by the war; and the consequence was, such a peace as we had now obtained. If we were to thank ministers for success in preserving us against jacobinism, why might not the emperor boast of this as a successful war? Why might not the king of Sardinia boast of having preserved the island of Sardinia, though he had lost Piedmont? He, however, thanked the present ministers for having concluded the definitive treaty, which he highly approved, under all the circumstances; and concluded by observing on the absurdity of thanking all his majesty's late cabinet ministers, maintaining, as they did, different opinions, some of them consequently being wrong.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, the right hon. gentleman had expressed his determination not to vote in favour of the original motion, because he was not prepared to give it an affirmative. With respect to the removal of the late minister, he affirmed it not to be a dismissal from his majesty's councils, but a voluntary resignation, influenced by the deepest sense of duty. There was nothing in the life of that great and distinguished man which more entitled him to the admiration of his country, than the motives which induced him to resign an office that he had so long held, with equal reputation to himself and advantage to the country. The amendment moved by the noble lord was not on this occasion hastily or obtrusively brought

Digitized by Google

forward; but after an interval of fourteen months, and after an hon. baronet (sir Francis Burdett) had brought forward a motion which tended to a vote of censure. The amendment did not require an unqualified assent to every measure of the late administration. It was a motion of approbation in the lump, without specifying particular measures. From M. Maret's overtures to this country in 1793, he believed that he himself was very zealous to accommodate matters; but the truth was, he had no powers to negotiate, and therefore was not attended to. And as to the negatives given to the overtures of Mr. Wickham and other persons, he assured the House of the deep regret felt by Mr. Pitt at these repeated failures. He had never seen affliction more keen, or distress more visible, than in the mind of his right hon. friend, on being obliged to continue the war. He extolled the great services of our army and navy. With regard to the financial operations of the late chancellor of the exchequer, it was owing to his consummate abilities, that the war, which had been undertaken for the destruction of our property, had terminated in a manner so favourable to our resources. He hoped the opinion of the utility and wisdom of the income tax would survive its being withdrawn. To that alone was to be attributed the high value of our funds. On the whole, the late administration had done every thing in their power to give security to the people; and he should, indeed, be forgetful of the transactions of the last nine years, were he not to concur in the amendment.

Mr. *W. Smith* said, that during the late administration, there was only one instance of a vote of personal approbation, namely, in 1796, when a loan was made, which then occupied a good deal of the attention of the public. He had taken the liberty on that occasion to move some resolutions, implying a censure on the chancellor of the exchequer; the result of which was, that the subject was referred to a committee, upon whose report the House thought proper to pass a vote of approbation. That, however, was not done without a previous inquiry, which was very different from the mode at present meant to be adopted. With regard to the income tax, he would only say, that so far from giving the minister credit for his ingenuity in forming it, he thought it impossible to devise any means of supply so odious and injurious.

Lord *Glenbervie* said, that he was the person who had moved the vote of approbation alluded to; but that it was done after inquiry had taken place in a committee. He did not conceive that such a circumstance having then happened, could be adduced as a precedent to regulate any future proceeding.

Mr. *Calcraft* thought very highly of the conduct of the late chancellor of the exchequer, but considered this vote of approbation too general.

Mr. *Foster* said, that if the amendment had been confined to measures of the late ministers relative to the war, he would have supported it; but it embraced many other objects, particularly the union with Ireland, which he could not praise ministers for, because he had always opposed this measure. He thought there would be an inconsistency in those Irish members voting for the amendment who had disapproved of a union, which had been carried by the most improper means.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, he could not tamely sit by and hear such fallacious insinuations. The union would stand on its own ground, and was not to be shaken by side-winds and unfounded aspersions on individuals, who had sacrificed so much in bringing it about.

Mr. *Foster* observed, that what he had said was not an insinuation, but a positive charge of the most corrupt practices, which he was ready to prove.

Mr. *Tierney* observed, that here was another ground for the House not to acquiesce in the amendment. A privy counsellor of Ireland had broadly asserted charges of corruption against the late ministers. If this vote should pass, the present chancellor of the exchequer might think he was minister of the country; but he could assure him he would no longer be so, since the present motion was evidently intended to bring back Mr. Pitt to the king's councils. It was said by some persons, that he was dismissed. If this were the case, what a reflection on the royal prerogative to bring forward such a vote! If he resigned, the amendment would seem to insinuate that the royal authority acted wrong in refusing to listen to his salutary advice. How would this vote bear in respect to the spirit of conciliation now asserted in regard to France? How would the present ministers feel, if the first work of the peace were a statue in France in honour of Marat and Robespierre? How might the French govern-

Digitized by Google

ment think if we voted so immediately such a fulsome panegyric on a person so obnoxious to them? It was a wanton act to drag the House of Commons through mud and mire to bring back the late ministers against the king's will.

The question being put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question," it passed in the negative. Then the question being proposed, that the words, "It is the opinion of this House, that, by the wisdom, energy, and firmness of his majesty's councils, during the late arduous contest, supported by the unparalleled exertions of our fleets and armies, and by the magnanimity and fortitude of the people, the honour of this country has been upheld, its strength united and consolidated, its credit and commerce maintained and extended, and our invaluable constitution preserved against the attacks of foreign and domestic enemies," be inserted instead thereof; an Amendment was proposed, by sir Henry Mildmay, to be made to the said proposed Amendment, by adding at the end thereof these words: "That the right hon. William Pitt has rendered great and important services to his country, and deserves the gratitude of this House." Upon this a long conversation arose; after which the House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Mr. Grey ..... Mr. Thomas Jones	52
Noes	Mr. Baker..... Mr. Sargent	224

So it passed in the negative.

Then the main question being put, that after the word "That," in the original motion, the words, "It is the opinion of this House, that, by the wisdom, energy, and firmness, of his majesty's councils, during the late arduous contest, supported by the unparalleled exertions of our fleets and armies, and by the magnanimity and fortitude of the people, the honour of this country has been upheld, its strength united and consolidated, its credit and commerce maintained and extended, and our invaluable constitution preserved against the attacks of foreign and domestic enemies," be inserted. The House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Lord Belgrave ..... Mr. Sargent	222
Noes	Mr. William Smith ..... Mr. Grey	52

So it was resolved in the affirmative. Then the main question, so amended, being put; Resolved, "That it is the opinion of this House, That, by the wisdom, energy, and firmness, of his majesty's councils, during the late arduous contest, supported by the unparalleled exertions of our fleets and armies, and by the magnanimity and fortitude of the people, the honour of this country has been upheld, its strength united and consolidated, its credit and commerce maintained and extended, and our invaluable constitution preserved against the attacks of foreign and domestic enemies."

Sir Henry Mildmay's motion, viz. "That the right hon. William Pitt has rendered great and important services to his country, and especially deserves the gratitude of this House," was now put separately. Upon which, an amendment was proposed, by Mr. Fox, to be made to the question, by inserting after the name of the right hon. William Pitt, the names of lord Grenville, earl Spencer, Mr. Dundas, Mr. Wyndham, and the earl of Rosslyn; as they were Mr. Pitt's colleagues in the conduct of the war. Mr. Thomas Grenville considered this amendment not seriously meant as a mark of respect to his noble relation. Mr. Chancellor Addington intreated Mr. Fox to withdraw his amendment. Mr. Fox declined so doing, and said, that inasmuch as the House so warmly approved of the war, those men who clung to it with so much fondness, were as well, if not better, entitled to the thanks of the House, than the right hon. gentleman who had deserted it. The amendment was negatived. Another amendment was proposed, by Mr. Grey, to be made to the question, by inserting after the word "country," the words "by which the present government has been enabled to conclude a safe, honourable, and glorious peace. This passed in the negative. Then the main question being put, "That the right hon. William Pitt has rendered great and important services to his country, and especially deserves the gratitude of this House;" the House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Sir H. P. St. John Mildmay Mr. Canning	211
Noes	Mr. Byng ..... Mr. William Smith	52

So it was resolved in the affirmative; and at five in the morning the House adjourned.

Digitized by Google

List of the Minority.

Aubrey, sir J.	Milner, sir W.
Adair, R.	North, D.
Brogden, J.	Nicholls, J.
Barclay, G.	Porter, colonel
Byng, G.	Ponsonby, W.
Bouverie, hon. E.	Ponsonby, J.
Bouverie, hon. W. H.	Philips, J. G.
Cavendish, lord G.	Russel, lord W.
Combe, H. C.	Richardson, J.
Copley, sir L.	Robson, M. B.
Calcraft, J.	Ridley, sir M. W.
Curwen, J. C.	Spencer, lord R.
Denison, W. J.	Stewart, C. W.
Erskine, hon. T.	Stanley, lord
Folkestone, lord	Smith, W.
Fox, hon. C. J.	Sheridan, R. B.
Foster, right hon. J.	Shum, G.
Grey, hon. C.	Sturt, C.
Harrison, J.	St. John, hon. St. A.
Hare, J.	Somerville, sir M.
Howard, H.	Turner, sir G. P.
Jekyll, J.	Tufton, hon. H.
Jones, T.	Tierney, G.
Jeffries, N.	Western, C. C.
Lemon, sir W.	Walpole, hon. G.
Lemon, colonel	Whitbread, S.
Lloyd, J. M.	Wennington, sir Ed.

Debate in the Commons on the Yeomanry and Volunteer Corps Offers of Service Bill.] May 4. Mr. *Yorke* (secretary at war) rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to enable his majesty to accept of the offers of service of the yeomanry and volunteer corps, under certain regulations. It was unnecessary for him to dwell upon that subject, as the late thanks of the House was a sufficient proof of the effectual service they had rendered the state, and how much they had contributed to the tranquillity of the country in very dangerous circumstances. He hoped that that their active assistance would no longer be necessary to preserve internal tranquillity. Every Englishman must be convinced that his own constitution was superior to all others. He hoped also, that Europe would enjoy a long repose, and that we should have nothing to fear from external foes. But after such violent convulsions, it was improper to throw aside at once our means of defence; it was prudent still to keep up a corps, from which most effectual protection could be derived. These considerations, were sufficient to show the propriety of enabling his majesty to accept of the services of the yeomanry and volunteer corps under certain regulations; and the regulations he should propose were these: that their services should be perfectly voluntary; and that only such corps should be kept up as were to receive no pay. As an inducement to the yeomanry to offer their services, he intended to propose certain exemptions in their favour; viz. that a member of the yeomanry corps might procure an exemption from the militia, by appearing completely armed and equipped on horseback at military exercise for seven days each year; and from the horse-duty, by appearing in the summer one day each year. If it should be judged expedient to keep up any of the volunteer infantry, he should propose, that this should take place only in the great cities, where they could be easily collected. The exemptions he meant to attach to their service were, an exemption from the militia if they appeared 14 days each year at exercise; and exemption from the hair-powder tax, if they appeared one day each year at exercise. The only expenses which he meant should fall on the public were, a serjeant to each troop with adjutant's pay; arms from the public stores, and a small allowance to the serjeants to keep their horses in order. In case of actual invasion, he meant that these corps should be placed under military law, and at the call of the Sheriffs. It was needless for him to dwell on the excellence of any measure that tended to keep up the martial spirit of the country; for unless a martial character was preserved, all our other advantages would perish "like the baseless fabric of a vision." It was only by cultivating among all ranks this military character; it was only by every citizen being ready in circumstances of emergency to go forth with his sword by his side and his helmet on his head, as in the days of our ancestors, that our national independence and glory could be preserved. He then moved, "That leave be given to bring in a bill, to enable his majesty to avail himself of the offers of certain yeomanry and volunteer corps to continue their services."

Sir *E. Knatchbull* seconded the motion. He paid some handsome compliments to the valour and loyalty of his constituents; and hoped, that if their private concerns obliged several of them to retire from the yeomanry, it would not be considered as any diminution of those principles.

Mr. *Spencer Stanhope* said, that this was, he believed, the first attempt to keep up such an establishment as this when the country was in profound tranquillity, and

Digitized by Google

he could not help considering it adverse to the ancient constitutional practice of this realm. Such a measure could only have one or two objects in view. It might be formed to keep down any return of that Jacobin spirit which had manifested itself in 1792. But if such a spirit was to be kept down, he thought it would be better quelled by the operation of those bills for the preservation of public tranquillity which had been suffered to expire. If force was necessary, he conceived that it should be the force in the hands of the civil power, and not the force of military violence. If the measure was not formed with this view, it must have a reference to the possibility of the recurrence of a scarcity. He wished that any other mode than this could be adopted to accomplish this object, for that now proposed seemed liable to serious objections. If the farming interest was to be kept up in the situation of yeomanry, a spirit of exasperation could not fail to be the consequence; and in case of the recurrence of a scarcity, the worst consequences might be apprehended.

Sir *W. Young* said, that the observations of the hon. gentleman, with regard to its being unusual to keep up yeomanry corps in the time of profound peace, were applicable only to profound peace—a term belonging to former times, but now no longer to be used. There was nothing now like profound peace in the political situation of Europe. It was necessary for us always to be prepared for defence; and where could we find better guardians of our liberty and safety than in our volunteer corps?

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that the object of the motion was, to give to this country the full benefit of the wise system under which we had hitherto protected ourselves; and, among other effects to be produced by it, was that of deterring persons from attempting, from an idea of our weakness, to disturb the tranquillity of the country. Of all the characters that could be given to a bill, that which had been stated by an hon. gentleman was the most extraordinary; for he had said it was inconsistent with the constitution of these realms that such a measure should be adopted in time of peace. Now he thought exactly the reverse. There was no circumstance belonging to the constitution or composition of our military corps throughout, that had more attracted his intention, or made more impression on his mind, than the idea that such a corps as this could exist only in a free country. A determination on the part of government to put arms into the hands of a whole people, and a resolution on the part of the people to accept them for the defence and security of both, was peculiar to the community in which we had the happiness to live. It proved a double security, and a double pledge. It was a pledge on the part of government, that they should never attempt any thing hostile to the constitution. It was a pledge on the part of the people, that they valued as well as understood its excellence; that they were steadily attached to, and determined to preserve it. He was, therefore, warranted in saying, that the measure would afford gratification to the country at large. It proved the good intentions of government towards the people, the attachment of the people to its government, and the zeal and ardour of both for the constitution, by which they were mutually protected. It was upon this public principle that those volunteer corps had existed and flourished in this country. It had been said, that such a power as this might be wanted to meet the remnants of Jacobin principles and spirit which had manifested itself for a few years in this country. He was confident that the Jacobin spirit, which once appeared in this country, was very much subdued. The general sense of mankind had driven it into its hiding places. Those principles which it attempted to uphold, and those vain theoretical notions which it endeavoured to fasten upon a deluded multitude, had, by dreadful experience of their practical effects, become universally odious. There might be a few who still adhered to this system; but they were so inconsiderable in number, so degraded in character, so detested in principle, that they had no hope of appearing in such numbers again in this country. The lesson which this system had taught mankind, was a great and useful one. What had occurred in this respect was not likely to occur again; but might occur again; against which there could not be a better antidote than that of putting arms into the hands of a people who had shown their abhorrence of such principles. He was convinced, that the laws of this country as they stood would be sufficient for the preservation of the public peace; but if there should be any material interrup-

Digitized by Google

tion which the authority of the civil magistrate was not able to suppress (and he hoped there never would be a disposition to use force without cause), it would then be time enough to use military force; and he knew not how we could secure to ourselves so much military force with the chance of so little military violence, as by the plan now proposed.

Leave was given to bring in the bill.

Debates in both Houses on Motions for Papers relative to the Treaty of Peace with France.] May 5. The Earl of *Carlisle* rose to bring forward his promised motion respecting that part of the preliminary treaty which related to the affairs of the stadtholder; in doing which his lordship went generally over the leading points of the treaty in other respects; which he considered as extremely degrading to this country, and highly prejudicial to that intercouse which she held with the other nations of Europe, under those ancient treaties which had not been recognised or revived, but totally abandoned under the present treaty. He expatiated on the unshaken attachment which the stadtholder had maintained towards this country at the outset of the war. Not until the French army was within a few miles of his capital, did he abandon his situation, and then was compelled to fly with his consort and the wreck of his family in an open boat; and not only was he driven from his dominions, but his private property was seized and confiscated, and his family left destitute of every means of support. But, notwithstanding these sacrifices sustained from his attachment to this country, and notwithstanding the boasts of those who formed the preliminary treaty that ample compensation had been stipulated for that illustrious personage in the losses he had sustained; notwithstanding the article in the preliminary treaty, by which that compensation was stipulated; yet did it unquestionably appear, that this stipulation was violated almost in the very moment of its conclusion, and in the same room with the noble marquis by whom the treaty was concluded; for it was now known that a distinct article was concluded by the minister of France with the plenipotentiary of the Dutch, immediately after the signature of the definitive treaty between the four powers, by which the French government engaged to guarantee Holland against contributing to the compensation of the stadtholder. Such a conduct on the part of France, in the very moment of concluding a definitive treaty, by which the four powers lately at war were mutually pledged to each other in the most ample compensation, gave to the French government such a decided feature of perfidiousness, as would not fail to excite sentiments of indignation in every just and honourable mind, and to rouse every sentiment of generous feeling for the injuries and insults thus newly meditated towards that much wronged and illustrious character. Such conduct on the part of France must shake every fair reliance upon their faith; and as no stipulation whatever of the fund, or the country from whence those promised compensations were to be derived, had been specified in the treaty, he desired to know where was the ground of reliance upon that faith which was already violated in the very moment it was pledged? Under these circumstances, he considered the cause of the stadtholder as, if not totally abandoned, at least left open for new contests. He considered, however, this country as bound by every principle of honour to maintain the claims of the stadtholder, who had sacrificed so much in her cause. His lordship concluded by moving for a humble address to his majesty, praying that a copy of such communications be laid before the House as have been made to his majesty by the French government, respecting the secret article concluded by France with Holland, explanatory of the subject of compensation to the stadtholder.

Lord *Pelham* said, that no communication whatever, on the article alluded to by the noble lord's motion, had been made to the government of this country by that of France. But even if there had, he did not see how his majesty's ministers could be called on officially to lay before the House a communication of a matter between France and Holland, which concerned themselves only, and had no relation whatever to this country. Much stress had been laid by the noble lord on the losses sustained by the illustrious personage alluded to, merely for his adherence to this country. But he must deny the inference, that those losses were sustained merely in the cause of this country. They were sustained in the common cause of civilized society. Although we felt disappointment in not being able to obtain for the stadtholder compensation to the extent we could have wished, did it

Digitized by Google

therefore follow, that, in pursuit of his restoration, this country was bound to continue the war without any other object?

Marquis *Cornwallis* observed, that, notwithstanding what had fallen from the noble mover on the subject of this explanatory article, he by no means considered that article as at all violatory of the pledge of compensation to the stadtholder. That compensation, on the contrary, stood guaranteed upon a security as strong as could possibly be founded on the faith of a solemn treaty between the four contracting nations.

The *Lord Chancellor* contended, that the pledged faith of nations was an ample security for the stipulation to procure a full compensation for the losses suffered by the house of Orange.

Lord *Auckland* regretted, that a more satisfactory article had not been obtained as a security for the compensation to be made to the prince of Orange than the 18th of the definitive treaty. He wished to have seen the means of making the compensation, the amount of it, the fund from which it was to be taken, described explicitly. He spoke highly of the claims of the prince of Orange on this country, from what fell within his own knowledge during the four years he had spent in Holland as a minister of this country. Dissatisfied, however, as he was with the definitive treaty, he derived some consolation from the noble marquis's declaration, that he had no doubt but the 18th article would be solemnly fulfilled by the contracting parties.

The motion was then withdrawn.

May 5. Mr. *William Elliot* rose to move for certain papers connected with the definitive treaty. He said, he had no doubt the motions he had to propose would meet with the unanimous assent of the House. The first paper for which he should move was, the treaty of Badajos. There were two treaties concluded at Badajos, one between Portugal and France, which never was ratified, and another between Portugal and Spain, which was ratified, and which was the document he alluded to. By that treaty the important town of Olivenza was ceded to Spain, and the integrity of Portugal was most materially violated. This paper was alluded to in the 7th article of the definitive treaty. His second motion would be for copies of any conventions or armistices concluded between France and Portugal during the year 1801, and communicated to the British government. It was to be feared that these contained many commercial stipulations highly detrimental to this country; and one of them was the basis of the treaty by which a great part of Portuguese America was ceded. The hon. gentleman entered into a consideration of the fatal effects of this cession. He said, this district had always been reckoned of the utmost importance by Portugal, not on account of its fertility, nor its population, nor its trade, though all these were considerable; but because it was the only security for the valuable but vulnerable possession of Brazil. This was forcibly illustrated by the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which was guaranteed by Great Britain. By the articles of this treaty, France was expressly prohibited from crossing the river St. Vincent, or trading to the mouth of the Amazons. In the preliminaries it was declared that the dominions of her most faithful majesty should be preserved entire. But on the 29th September, two days before the signature of the preliminaries, a treaty had been concluded between Portugal and France, by which the former power was obliged to cede an immense tract of country in America. When the noble lord was questioned upon this point, he was evidently much embarrassed. At last an explanation was given; from which it appeared, that by "entire" was meant the dominions of which Portugal had not been despoiled. This statement of the noble lord, however, was questioned in the French councils, and no satisfactory information could be obtained. The treaty of Badajos might be adhered to; but the object of France was as completely gained as if her original pretensions had been admitted. She had secured to herself the navigation of the Arawari. From a Dutch map that he had, it appeared, that the only entrance to this river was between the two islands Nuova and Penetenza. France thus controlled the commerce of Brazil, and the whole wealth of South America lay at her mercy. What means she might use to extend her usurpations he would not pretend to foretel; or whether she might not halt for a while to consolidate what she had already usurped. But, after what had taken place in Italy, not a doubt could be entertained that sooner or later France would seize Brazil and Peru. The words of the definitive treaty inflicted

Digitized by Google

upon this country a needless indignity. It asserted the integrity of Portugal, and guaranteed its dismemberment. We held out our protection only to display our weakness. He should thirdly move for the copies of any treaties entered into between Spain and France during the late negotiations for peace. Our new ally dealt in masked conventions, and, after several mock treaties, one made its appearance, by which the whole of Louisiana was ceded to France. She thus got possession of a large and fertile tract upon the river Mississippi, not more distant from Mexico than Northumberland from the metropolis of England. Much had been said of capital: here was a capital on which France would not fail to draw, and the world might long rue that such resources were in such hands. The French were now brought up to the very confines of Canada, and might soon re-establish their empire in that country. But the united states of America had most to fear. Kentucky and the western states had little connexion with the eastern, they were separated by immense forests, and peopled by different inhabitants, adventurers from every quarter. The only outlet to their trade was the Mississippi, and the American government had stipulated with Spain for the free navigation of that river. Now, these states must be completely under the control of France. If France does not separate them from the rest, she will make America at all times dependent upon her, and will draw her into the confederacy against our naval greatness and the dignity of our flag; if indeed he could use the expression, now that the dignity of our flag, which had once been reckoned our most valuable possession, had been disgraced and degraded. It might be said, that the spirit of Europe would rise to prevent these usurpations in America. Some people seemed to consider the spirit of Europe as a kind of incantation. A foul and flagrant usurpation had lately taken place in the very heart of Europe, while Europe inertly looked on. Yet the spirit of Europe was, to protect the independence of America. Gentlemen who held this language had profited little by ten years of woful experience. When France had conquered the continent of Europe, could the continent of America be safe? The expedition to Egypt was at first called visionary, but if the principles of the present day had been acted upon by ministers then France would now have been in quiet possession of that country, and perhaps other provinces of the Ottoman empire would have fallen a prey to her rapacity. He maintained that the cession of Louisiana had changed the whole complexion of the question. Had this fact been known at the time when the preliminaries were debated, he was convinced the House would have paused before it assented to them. He had great respect for ministers as individuals, and he would by no means say that they wished to impose upon the House. He believed that they were ignorant themselves; but ignorance would not excuse them. Did they take the proper means to procure information? Did they peremptorily put the question? If France returned no answer, that was the greatest indignity to the government and to the country. If France returned a false answer, it was a fraud; and in either case the negotiations ought to have been broken off. At any rate, they were acquainted with the fact before the signature of the definitive treaty; and before they proceeded farther, they were bound in honour to come again and ask for the opinion of the House. He concluded by moving for "a copy of the Treaty of Badajos, referred to in the 7th article of the Definitive Treaty of Peace."

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that to the motion he had no objection; but he must say, that the hon. gentleman had taken a most unusual mode of proceeding; he defied any one to point out an instance when, in the height of faction, an opposition had ever adopted such a line of conduct. There had frequently been discussions concerning armaments and other acts of government, and the constant practice had been to give notice of a motion for an inquiry, to move for necessary papers, without entering into the main question; and when appointed, then at least to state the reasons why ministers should not be censured or dismissed. Gentlemen, in making their preliminary motions now, took the widest range. He could not help expressing the greatest surprise that, in what regarded Portugal, the definitive treaty should be thought to have departed from the preliminaries. Questions upon this point had been put repeatedly, and rather vexatiously; to which he had always replied, that the river Arawari was to be the boundary between the two Guianas, and that the treaty of Badajos was to be abided by. The treaty of Madrid had been abandoned, and the Portugueze re-

Digitized by Google

tained the command of both banks of the Amazons. As to the imputation of unfairness towards Portugal, Portugal decided upon her own fate, without the intervention of Great Britain. We were left to the alternative of supporting Portugal, or saving Egypt; the latter was considered, even by the court of Lisbon, as the most important; and therefore a disposable force, which, being divided, would become inefficient, was consolidated and sent to Egypt. But before this was done, Portugal herself made two applications to this country. Her first was, that we should release her from all her engagements, and exclude our shipping from her ports; her second application was, whether, in the event of a failure in the negotiation, this country could afford her pecuniary aid? Ministers first refused their aid; but since they released her from those engagements, they had notwithstanding voted her a subsidy to make good her conditions with France, which she accomplished accordingly. He then appealed to the House, whether Great Britain had broken her faith with Portugal? The fact was, Portugal, pressed between two enemies, Spain and France, was forced to these cessions, which no subsequent treaty could counteract. As to the motion therefore relating to Badajos, he would not oppose it; and regarding the second head of information, viz. Copies of Treaties between France and Portugal, these he would consent to if the hon. gentleman would confine the period to the signing of the treaty of Madrid in 1801. But as to the other papers or treaties, it was impossible to grant them; they never were official, and this country was not a party in any of them. He maintained, that our naval superiority, with regard to France, never was so high as at present, and that nothing could tend so much to degrade our flag as the language of the hon. gentleman.

Dr. *Lawrence* contended, that ministers should not decline giving information on particular points as required. The House did not know whether the treaty of Madrid were an existing treaty or not: and this ignorance was a confirmation of the disgrace of the country. In the tricking language of the preliminaries, the integrity of Portugal was guaranteed, but not as before the war. When this defect was discovered, then came another sort of integrity; so that we were glad to get out of the trap in which we were caught, by leaving a part behind us. It was true, we had sent Portugal a sum of money; but was this alone acting with good faith to a nation to whom we owed protection? It was unfair to answer the charge of the surrender of our flag, by extolling our navy. Nobody questioned the lustre of its achievements. If in the late war, it was a triumph that we could throw supplies into Gibraltar, and escape a battle, how great must be the glory of our navy now, when it was matter of regret that we could not cut away the chained navy of France from her shores! The British flag was the last symbol of our dominion in the northern seas. It was to that, the disapprobation was directed; and when ministers should come forward to justify its surrender, he hoped they would not construe the charge into an attack upon the British navy.

Mr. *T. Jones* denied that the British flag was dishonoured: if he thought it was, he should be the first to move to bring ministers to condign punishment. From the number of papers demanded, and the variety of inquiry, one would suppose the gentlemen opposite had formed themselves into a war committee. Those gentlemen, now that peace was concluded, seemed to wish to wage a separate war of their own. They contended, that the nation had received a fundamental insult; and all their arguments on this point were certainly arguments *à posteriori*. But if even all that they had said of the peace was true, what good could it answer, to tell the enemy that we had concluded a treaty, by which our national interests were injured, and our national glory tarnished? He did not say that the peace was a glorious one; but it was a peace salutary to the country, a peace which had brought back comfort to the domestic fire-side; and any attempt to disturb it, would, he was confident, be resisted both by the House and the country.

Mr. *T. Grenville* said, that if the mode of discussing so interesting a subject in separate detail was not adopted, no member could, amid the multiplicity of important interests and relations which the treaty affected, possibly understand what it was to which he was called upon to give his approbation. With the statement of our relations with Portugal, as made by the noble lord, he perfectly agreed; but he differed with him very materially in the inferences he had drawn from this statement. What was the statement of the noble lord on this subject? It was

Digitized by Google

that we were bound to defend Portugal, and to make exertions for the recovery of Egypt. The late administration, conceiving that both objects could not be effectually obtained, had preferred that in which, at the time, we were most likely to succeed. To the propriety of this arrangement he was not disposed to object; but what were the consequences which it produced? Portugal, deprived of our protection, had been obliged to ask a release from her engagement; and, yielding to the necessity of circumstances, had been compelled to make peace on most disadvantageous terms. Now, what was the inference which the noble lord drew from this situation of Portugal? That, under all the circumstances, we were called upon by good faith, to buy back the cessions, which, in a moment of peril and of difficulty, our ally had been forced to make as the purchase of her peace. Was this the manner in which faith was to be maintained with our ancient ally? This, he was sure, was not the manner in which the late administration would have stipulated for the integrity of our territories. They did feel that they were bound to purchase back restitution, not of the description provided by the present treaty, but of a substantial and efficient nature.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that he was as averse as his noble friend from imputing factious motives to any member; but he must say, that the mode which had been adopted was so singular, that he was at a loss how to reply in an orderly manner to arguments, the bearings of which, on the question before the House, it was impossible to discover. There were, however, some points of fact, on which he trusted he might enter into some explanation. The treaty of Badajos was known and understood by the government here, and particularly that part which related to the limits between French and Portuguese Guiana. Ministers were afraid that Portugal might be terrified into concessions even more injurious to herself; and, with a view to this apprehension, a stipulation was inserted in the preliminaries, by which the subsequent treaty of Madrid was virtually annulled. They had not been insensible to the imminent danger which hung over Portugal; they had stipulated for her; and in fact, many of the sacrifices in the West Indies were made, with a view to preserve the integrity of her territory. We had, therefore, been far from violating any obligation of good faith to that country. He must also say, that ministers had not, by any act of commission or of omission, tarnished, in any one respect, the honour of the British flag.

The first and second motions were agreed to. The third was negatived.

May 6. Earl *Temple* rose to move for certain papers relative to Malta. It was agreed, he said, in the preliminary treaty, that Malta should be restored to the order as it was before the war, placed under the guarantee of a third power. By the definitive treaty both these stipulations were infringed; the order was not restored to its situation before the war; and a new langue had been introduced into the order, inconsistent with the radical principles of nobility, on which the order was founded, as not requiring proofs of nobility. This was a departure from the original stipulation. Another stipulation enjoined the knights to return; an injunction with which they could not be supposed willing to comply, in consequence of the want of support, four-fifths of their revenues having been swept away. Supposing they were to return and to elect a grand master, the election would be made under the influence of France: if, indeed, the election of a grand master had not already taken place, it being well known that France had continued to carry on an intrigue with the people of the island to surrender it to France on its evacuation by the English, and the treaty having stipulated for the validity of such an election. Another stipulation excluded the Barbary powers from the ports of Malta; whereas it was only by keeping them open to those powers, that the independence of the island could be maintained; as it was from them that the island was supplied with provisions. Another objection was, that the treaty proclaimed the neutrality of the island, but it did not guarantee that neutrality, or state any thing specific. The clause inviting his Sicilian majesty to garrison it for a year with 2,000 troops was also delusive, his Sicilian majesty having no interest to induce him to undertake that trouble and expense; and even supposing that he had, it would be only putting the island in the hands of France. In answer to these objections, it was said, that the great powers of Europe were guarantees of its independence. This also was unsa-

Digitized by Google

tisfactory. It did not appear, that they had accepted the trust, nor had we any security that they would. Supposing, however, that they should accept it, still the island must eventually fall under the power of France. Russia was too remote, and had a design upon it. Prussia and Austria had no interest, and could not be expected to take an active part, after tamely acquiescing in the establishment of the Italian republic. The result, therefore, would be, to leave it at the disposal of France, Spain, and Great Britain, being a majority against us. His lordship then expatiated upon the importance of the island, and also upon the strength and value of the island of Elba, and the usurpation of the Italian republic. He next referred to the grand alliance in the reign of William 3rd, as an example which we should have imitated in the present conjuncture; and concluded by moving for an account of all "commercial duties and territorial revenues, raised within the island of Malta, since it was surrendered to his majesty's forces." The motion was agreed to. The noble earl then moved for, "a copy of the treaty of peace concluded at Luneville, between Austria and France."

Lord *Hawkesbury* objected to the motion, because no parliamentary ground had been stated for the production of the treaty. That treaty was concluded a year ago, and this country was no party to it; and it was not included in the definitive treaty of peace. This treaty could not be wanted for information, because, in reality, a copy of it might be had at every bookseller's shop.

Mr. *Grenville* said, that the cession of the Cisalpine republic was so generally understood to increase the power of France in that quarter, that most people thought we should have retained Malta, as a countervailing possession. It could not then be argued, that the treaty of Luneville, by which the Cisalpine republic was given up to France, was a question unconnected with a discussion relating to Malta.

Mr. *Pitt* could not conceive how the production of this treaty could be necessary for the purpose of the debate; nor did he think it could be properly applied for on the grounds which had been stated. His right hon. friend must know, that the treaty of Luneville was not made in conjunction with this country, and that we were not a party necessarily connected with it. Whether we approved of the government of Austria yielding to the necessity which dictated that treaty, was another question, but it certainly was not a British question. The mode of proceeding adopted by his right hon. friends upon this occasion seemed to be, to separate, and to take one by one, the different articles of this treaty; and by these motions, to discuss each stipulation by itself, instead of investigating the whole treaty at once, and deciding upon its general merits. His right hon. friends confessed that the subject was not before the House; they called for documents to enable them to decide; and yet they argued with as much peremptoriness and decision, as if not only no farther information was necessary, but as if the question admitted of no doubt. They decided without hesitation or difficulty, that one stipulation was ineffectual—that another was inconsistent with the interest of the country—that a third was disgraceful, &c. He agreed with his right hon. friends, that this subject was to be considered with a reference to the general situation of Europe; but if the treaty of Luneville was laid before the House, of what use would it be at present? His right hon. friend had lamented some of the stipulations of that treaty. So did he. It was, however, now set aside by an act of the French government, which was a new monument of the ambition of that country, erected even between the preliminary and definitive treaty. His right hon. friends opposite to him, and, he did not differ in their opinions of the chief consul and goverament of France. As far as that conduct went, it might be urged as an objection to the whole treaty. He did not differ from them upon general points, but with regard to the inference that might be drawn from them. The way to consider this subject would be, when the time for discussion came, to consider the objects gained and fortified by the treaty of peace, compared with the probable effect of a prosecution of the war, under all the circumstances in which Europe was placed, when all the other powers were making separate treaties of peace, and securing their separate interest. There was nothing more unfair, than thus taking the treaty article by article, and debating it in detail, when the only proper way to consider such a subject, was to take it in the whole with all its bearings and objects.

Digitized by Google

Mr. *Windham* thought the House had the same ground and reason to call for the treaty of Luneville, as it had for the treaties of Badajos and Madrid. To him the production of the treaty of Luneville appeared indispensable, because it afforded strong proof of the bad faith of the French government. It was impossible, in his view of things, to form an accurate judgment of the merits of the definitive treaty, without having the means, at the same time, of entertaining a comprehensive view of the general state and situation of all the European powers. Those who opposed the motion, confounded inquiry with decision.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, he would not pretend to decide upon the intention of gentlemen, in the motions that had been made upon this subject; he could only judge of the tendency of them. His right hon. friend had said, that he did not ask for the judgment of the House at present on any part of this subject; now that was what he complained of; for when the judgment of the House could not be had upon the subject, gentlemen were taking a course to affect that judgment beforehand—a mode of proceeding which was certainly at variance with the practice of the House. But it was said, it was right for the House to know what had been done with regard to the Cisalpine republic, and that therefore the treaty of Luneville should be produced. The answer to which was, that the treaty of Luneville could not explain that subject. The treaty of Badajos had a necessary connexion with very important parts of the negotiation. The treaty of Luneville had no such connexion.

The motion was negatived.

May 7. Earl *Spencer* rose to move for an account of the amount of the territorial revenues and duties upon commerce of the island of Malta, since the said island was surrendered to his majesty's arms. It must be obvious to all their lordships, that the island of Malta was a main article of negotiation in the lately decided treaty of peace. In the preliminaries, according to the 4th article, it was stipulated that "the island of Malta, with its dependencies, should be evacuated by the troops of his Britannic majesty, and restored to the order of St. John of Jerusalem; for the purpose of rendering the island completely independent of either of the two contracting parties, it shall be placed under the guarantee and protection of a third power." Let their lordships look to the definitive treaty to see how far this preliminary was fulfilled. The first stipulation of the 10th article of the definitive treaty regulated what langues should continue to subsist after the exchange of the ratifications of the treaty, and invited the knights of the order to return to Malta as soon as the exchange shall have taken place; that they shall form a general chapter, and proceed to the election of a grand master from amongst the natives, and those nations which preserve langues. His lordship observed, that by a subsequent stipulation there was henceforth to be no English nor French langue. The English langue had long discontinued to exist, and nominally by this stipulation the French langue was to be abolished; but would it in effect be abolished? The remaining langues would be the three of Provence, Auxerre, and another district in Lombardy. From the state of dependence on France in which those places stood, they were to all intents and purposes French. Spain had two langues; and who would say that the French could not dictate to Spain in this as in every other respect? The Italian states had another langue. Could it be denied that the relationship which the Italian republic and the chief consul, as president of that republic, stood in to each other, placed it beyond a doubt that the Italian republic would be under the dominion of France? The remaining langue was the German one, and he did not mean to say that the German langue might not act independently; but what chance was there of securing the island of Malta in a state of independence under such circumstances? It was, in fact, neither more nor less than leaving the island of Malta in the power of France. His lordship next spoke to the third stipulation under the tenth article of the definitive treaty, viz. the establishment of a Maltese langue, to be supported out of the land revenues and commercial duties of the island, who were to have dignities and appointments, and an appropriate auberge, and that no proofs of nobility should be necessary for the admission of knights into the said langue. Upon this the earl reasoned, and after contending that a langue of non-nobles would not assort well with the noble knights of the ancient langues, complained of it as a revolutionary organization of a

Digitized by Google

new constitution of government for the island of Malta, not only without the consent, but without even the having consulted the wishes of the Maltese themselves. He also complained of the inaccuracy of the English version of that part of the third stipulation of the tenth article of the treaty. He did not believe that "des habitans des isles de Malte," &c. was rightly translated, when it was stated to mean the "native inhabitants of Malta," &c. &c. He considered the stipulation for the evacuation of the island and its dependencies by his Britannic majesty within three months after the exchange of the ratifications, as exposing it to the immediate falling into the hands of the French; and said it was not at all probable that the king of Naples should furnish 2,000 men to serve as a garrison for the several fortresses on the island, when no resources were provided for their pay, clothing, and subsistence; but even supposing that the 2,000 Neapolitans did garrison the fortresses of the island, what sort of resistance could such a small number of Italian troops make against the armed hordes that France might pour into the island? His lordship passed great encomiums on the bravery of sir A. Ball, and another British officer, on taking possession of the island, and while they continued to hold it; declaring, that they had so conciliated the affections of the Maltese towards the British, that they would have been much better pleased to have remained under the protection of his majesty, than under that of any other power. In fact, Malta ought to have been secured to Great Britain, on account of the various important interests of the British empire, upon which it bore in a material degree. Our Indian empire was greatly exposed, as well as our Levant trade, and all our connexions by the way of the Mediterranean, by Malta being suffered to remain at the command of France; as every trifling difference between the republic and the king of Naples might be used as a pretext for the French to send a force against the island. But the whole of the article in the definitive treaty, and all its stipulations, were utterly impracticable. Where were the resources to come from, that were to defray the additional expense of supporting the new Maltese langue of non-nobles, of erecting and providing an auberge for them, for paying the 2,000 Neapolitan troops, keeping the fortresses in repair, and all the other charges of the island? The amount of the produce of the territorial revenues, as far as he could learn, was somewhat about 30,000*l.*, and the amount of the duties might be about 10,000*l.* more. The gross amount of the two was scarcely equal to the charge of the demands occasioned by the constitution of the government as it had hitherto stood. Where, then, was the surplus that would be necessary to be found? His lordship then moved for an account of the amount of the territorial revenues and commercial duties since the surrender of the island to his majesty's arms.

Lord *Hobart* did not object to the motion; but as a day was set apart for the discussion of the whole of the definitive treaty, he thought it ought to be considered altogether, and not by piece-meal. He therefore would barely notice, that as the noble lord had admitted that Malta was impregnable by blockade, we should not have succeeded if the Maltese had not themselves paved the way for our obtaining possession of the island; and therefore it could not be impolitic to pay a marked attention to the native inhabitants, by creating a Maltese langue. As we won the island by force of arms, we had an indisputable right to arrange its government. The noble earl was mistaken in supposing, that the king of Naples would not send the 2,000 men to garrison the fortresses of the island, as well as that he would not pay them. He would certainly do both. As to the additional expense which would be necessary to carry the article into effect, Malta was most advantageously situated for commercial purposes, and thence the revenue would increase.

The motion was agreed to.

May 12. Dr. *Laurence* said, that nothing had passed that could induce him to abandon the opinion he entertained, that the treaty of peace lately signed was, in many respects, most fatal to the country. Let any person consider of what importance to this country were its possessions in the East; and let him at the same time consider, how the security and well-being of those possessions were endangered by the non-renewal of the treaties by which they were heretofore protected. Let it be considered what advantages were given to the enemy by this neglect, or omission, or by whatever other name it was

Digitized by Google

to be called; advantages which the enemy himself already exaggerated. He would content himself with a confined consideration of the dangers to which our possessions in the East were exposed, though perhaps the whole were involved. He moved for information, not so much for himself as for the House; he required explanation, that the House might accept it where it should appear satisfactory; and he entered into discussion, that the facts might be fairly ascertained; so that when the House should come to debate on another day the most extensive and important subject that had ever been before it, gentlemen might not be involved in assertions, contradictions, and errors. If, in his attempt to explain this subject to the House, he should fall short, he was happy that there were persons present who, from the share they had taken in the transactions of India, were fully adequate to make up any deficiency on his part. When we were but simple merchants trading to the East, as all the nations of Europe had been previous to the conquests made by this country, a barren rock on the coast of Newfoundland was held to be an object of more importance then, than the settlement of Madras, the most valuable of the part of India where it was situated. From simple merchants we had advanced to the exercise of a delegated authority under the people of the country; in time our authority became paramount; and a people which was found capable of instructing the Greeks, when the Greeks conquered it, became nothing in their own country. Wherever the rights of others had been invaded, he should not hesitate to condemn that invasion. The authority of this country was substituted for that of the great mogul. He hoped that when he was forced to give an opinion on that substitution, he should give a sincere and honest opinion; but till called upon he should give no opinion. It was now necessary to see what rights had been asserted, though for his part he acknowledged no rights; to see what claims had been set up by France and Holland, and how those claims had been urged; to see what the triumphant treaty of 1763 had done for the adjustment of these claims. First, as to what related to Coromandel: France in that treaty renounced all the acquisitions she had made on the coast of Coromandel and Orissa since 1749. It had been said, that papers were unnecessary in debating a subject like this, for that history was sufficient. With pleasure and delight he appealed to a history so honourable as that of the period of which he now spoke. We were then unassuming merchants, trading to the East, but perhaps more firmly established than now, when the people of the country were disgusted with our ambitious encroachments. We were then satisfied with a neutrality; but the French, whose power was become more dangerous as it was more extended, were not so moderate. Dupleix, the first European governor who assumed the style of an eastern prince, invaded our rights, and roused exertions which succeeded in repelling him. In Bengal, at the same period, in consequence of a similar aggression, we had made a like exertion to vindicate ourselves, and by that exertion had acquired power. The French had acquired some power in Coromandel, and the five northern circars, of which we afterwards obtained a grant from the mogul. By this grant our title was superior to their's. They had, by subsequent treaties, formally renounced their claim; but, by the present treaty, that renunciation was done away, and a door opened for future contention.—He came now to Bengal. The French king had consented to keep no troops and to erect no fortifications on that coast. There was now nothing to hinder the French from doing so. There was no natural reason why they should not fortify themselves, and endeavour to render their establishments as secure as possible. It was true, the sovereign of the country might object, if these fortifications were carried to any improper length; but would the attempt to fortify be deemed a sufficient cause for war? There was no prohibition from fortifying in the present treaty. By former treaties the French had acknowledged Mohammed Ali as sovereign of the Carnatic, and consequently had subscribed to our authority: possibly even from that family some persons might now be found, whose title could be set up in opposition to our's. The stipulation in 1763, that no fortifications should be erected on the coast of Bengal, was scrupulously adhered to in the negotiation of 1783, that when a stipulation was made for a ditch to carry off the water from the fort of Chandernagore, a jealousy arose; and it was not without a critical explanation, and a full security that nothing farther would be attempted, that permission was given

Digitized by Google

and the delay arising from the arrangement of this matter was the excuse stated by the secretary of state for not bringing the definitive treaty to a more speedy conclusion. The jurisdiction of the factories may, on the ground of application for the surrender of persons taking refuge in them, again produce contention. The convention of 1787 granted a general exemption to all factories, and a general jurisdiction over all persons within certain limits. The omission of any regulation to this effect in the present treaty, might renew the ancient jealousies. Independent of this, there were many claims and pretensions arising out of the trade itself. The French, even when they were admitted to trade under our protection, refused to allow us to regulate their trade, and insisted on carrying it on in their own way; so that no advantage could be derived from it to the revenue of the company, which, when its collection was attempted to be enforced, they often resisted with force. A perpetual correspondence was carried on, on the subject of these aggressions; so numerous, and filled with facts so numerous, that a whole session would not be sufficient for the detail. The first objection to the treaty was in 1765, when Chandernagore was given up. Mr. Law objected against the strict enforcement of the treaty, and required permission to make lodgements for the protection of those engaged in the trade, which, together with his other demands, was made the subject of a letter from lord Clive. The complaints of foreigners would grow louder, unless the company entered into an agreement to supply them with cargoes to a certain amount out of the private trade of its servants. When Mr. Francis proposed to add a paragraph to the dispatches, saying that the nabob of Arcot was a legal sovereign, Mr. Hastings was unwilling to do so. The Dutch and Danes applied to this country as the sovereign power, and, under the name of a protection, were granted an indulgence; but they soon refused to submit to the payment of the duties, and we were compelled to exact them by force; and so far did their contumacy extend, that in time of scarcity they exported corn, which they knew their colours would protect, though a general embargo was laid. Nor could it be said that the knowledge of the embarrassment of this country, in consequence of the American war was the cause of this spirit of resistance; for it manifested itself in 1775, when the disturbances in America had only commenced, and the knowledge of them, could not yet have reached India. By the treaty of 1783, his Britannic majesty is to take such means as are in his power (not even then avowing the direct sovereignty) to procure certain facilities for the French trade: but two years had not elapsed when disputes arose, which soon came to a question of force, and ended in the firing of a vessel; a transaction which sir John Macpherson thought necessary to make the subject of a particular negotiation. Dr. L. then adverted to the treaty of 1787, which caused a board of justice to be holden, and in which the French brought forward their claims to the trade in India, particularly in the articles of salt, saltpetre, and opium, and which claims were only settled by a convention entered into with the government of this country; in which they were allowed to traffic with our East India Company on certain stipulations and fixed prices, in which it had been contended that our East India Company sustained a loss, but which, he asserted, was only a moderated gain.—He then begged to call the attention of the House to the Dutch claims. By the definitive treaty in 1784, their carrying trade was allowed, even to that of naval stores, and the freedom of navigation in the Indian seas. At all times the Dutch were jealous of our obtaining any settlement between our possessions in India and China, which might enable us to send the commodities of Bengal to that vast empire instead of carrying on our trade with it through the medium of dollars and bullion from England. They were then jealous, he said, even in those periods, when they were in alliance and connexion with us: by the alliance formed between France and Holland in 1795, they had become alienated from this country, and might now bring forward claims which before they would not have thought of. They had now become closely connected with that nation, which did not like any other logic than the *ultima ratio regum;* what was called the last reason of kings, but was now become the first of the republic: and if these claims should be advanced, we should have not only France to contend with, but Holland also, with a recruited navy. He then adverted to the Cape of Good Hope, which he stated to be of essential consequence to this country, both in time

Digitized by Google

of peace and war. It might be urged, he said, in defence of the non-revival of former treaties, that we did not give up our rights, but were prepared to defend them to the utmost. But, though they had not been revived generally, it was surely worth while to revive specifically that part which protected our commerce in the East Indies. "Thus," said he, "I have stated what was stipulated in our favour by former treaties, and is now relinquished, without giving my opinion whether the concession was voluntary, or extorted by force. It is not however in India, but here, that these affairs must be settled either by negotiation or force. We must now say, that in proportion to the magnitude of the concessions we have made, we are prepared to defend what remains to the last." He concluded by moving, "That there be laid before this House an account of the acquisitions made, or pretended to be made, by his most Christian Majesty, on the coast of Coromandel and Orissa, between the years 1748 and 1763."

Mr. *Dundas* said, that, whether our situation was to be decided by negotiation or by the sword, in India or elsewhere, he would dare say, there was no difference of opinion between them upon this point, namely, that it was essential to the interests of this country, not to do any thing ourselves to bring those rights into doubt. He stated it as a general maxim, on which he apprehended there was no difference of opinion: and yet he was afraid that, if motions like these were persevered in, much difference of opinion would arise upon the application of that principle. His proposition was such as he held to be clear as the sun at noon-day; namely, that no doubt could be entertained on the relative situation of this country and of France in India. No doubt had been expressed upon that subject till lately in that House, nor would any doubt be entertained elsewhere, but by bringing forward speculations of our own in that House, and making that doubtful in debate which was long acknowledged to be clear in principle. He then entered into an historical detail of the rise and progress of the British power in India, the contest which had taken place from the earliest periods, and the share taken therein by the French, in order to oppose our progress in India, down to the period in which lord Clive had so distinguished himself; to whom, for his valour as a soldier, and wisdom as a statesman, he paid the highest compliments; the result of whose measures he stated to have consummated the British power in India, and settled our sovereignty there by right of conquest, which right he reconciled to the inhabitants by the wise respect he paid to their prejudices. Having gone through a complete history of these events and having given a compendious account of the progress of the Mogul empire, and of its revolutions for eight centuries, he proceeded to state the conclusion which he drew from all these premises; which conclusion was this, That though we may feel it just and expedient to make such allowances to the prejudices of the inhabitants, and to make such regulations in our territories as we may please, or think adviseable, yet with regard to European powers, to them we say freely and distinctly, "we have gained this country by our arms, and by our arms we will keep it." For upon all the grounds which he had already stated, it was manifest that the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, Orissa, &c. had come to Great Britain by conquest, as much as any country ever came into the hands of another; and from the period when it became so under the government of lord Clive to the present day, the French never had, directly or indirectly, from the treaty of 1763, any right whatever to interfere with those provinces; but that they were by right of conquest subject to the sovereignty of the king of Great Britain to all intents and purposes, which sovereignty was to be exercised through the medium of the India company, and through the different organs established for the preservation of our provinces, as much as any other part of his majesty's dominions. He therefore laid it down as an indisputable proposition, that what we had gained thus by conquest, was to be considered with reference to any other European power, as totally subject to our sovereignty, without any interference of their's; that we were actually the sovereigns of India, and no European power had any right whatever to dispute our title to this power. Such was the state of the British power in India; the situation of France was extremely different, without one inch of territory, except what the might claim by the definitive treaty under consideration. Was there a man who had any doubt whatever as to these facts at this moment? Was there a man who thought, that if these facts, and the right arising out of

§.

Digitized by Google

them, were to be called in question, this country would not go the length of risking its last stake to support those rights, and refuse giving up one *iota* of them? He had no reason to be satisfied in any point of curiosity, by asking why it was expedient in the present moment to avoid references to ancient treaties in the present definitive treaty. It was a subject upon which he did not think it necessary to dwell at present; it was sufficient for him to say, that there was no diminution thereby in our power in India, no foundation whatever for any other to dispute our sovereignty there, nor any thing which entitled others to contest with us the rights upon which that sovereignty was founded. Nor was that all. He mistook greatly if any doubt was now entertained, that with regard to Great Britain, her sovereignty in India stood at that moment upon a better footing than if the former treaties had been renewed by it. The treaty of 1783 was unquestionably the very worst treaty this country ever entered into on the subject of Indian affairs. It was the business of his majesty's government, and a very laborious one it was, in the convention of 1787, to do away the evil created by the treaty of 1783. By that of 1783, our sovereignty in India was rendered disputable; by the convention of 1787, our sovereignty was re-established. Had the treaty now upon the table renewed any former treaty, it would have been impossible to refer to the convention of 1787, without also renewing the contests which were brought forward in 1783. It would have been impossible to have introduced the one, without also calling for an explanation of the other; and therefore the affairs of that country were much better, considerall the circumstances of the relative situation of this country and of France, in suffering all treaties whatever to be passed over in silence. We might, perhaps, by renewing some of the declarations and admissions of our sovereignty in India, as settled by the convention of 1787, have employed some antidote against the evil of which we had too much reason to complain, but it was manifest to him that we could not have such antidote without having also a certain portion of the poison, by the renewal of any discussion upon the subject of treaties; and therefore he had no difficulty whatever in saying, that upon a review of the whole condition of our affairs, considered with relation to those of France, we were infinitely better in passing the subject over in silence, than we should have been in endeavouring to renew any of them. He confessed, that when the rumour reached him, that the provisions of the convention of 1787 were left out of the present treaty, he shrunk under an apprehension that our power in India would be destroyed; and he was the more alarmed when he heard it said, that this was brought about in consequence of the views of France to undermine, and finally to overturn our sovereignty in India. This led him to turn the subject very seriously in his mind, and to look at all the ancient documents, to consider the whole matter deliberately; and the result was, that it was infinitely better for us to have no reference whatever to any treaty. But the learned gentleman asked, if the House could really think that we could be secure in India against the ambitious claims of France, as they had appeared in 1783, and which were done away in 1787? Did he really think we were safe now, without having renewed, by the present treaty, the provisions of the convention of 1787. This he would answer, by putting to the learned gentleman this question: Did he really think, that if the French should be disposed to renew the pretensions of 1783, or any other period, that they would be prevented from so doing by a few scraps of paper being laid on the table of that House, a species of artillery that would not be equal to the operation of a single field-piece for half a minute? But the learned gentleman would say, that the treaty of 1783 would establish the disposition of the French at that time to dispute our sovereignty in India. It would, indeed establish that which there was no need of establishing, because the thing was well known; the French did, on that occasion, as they would do on every occasion, provided they thought they could succeed in the attempt, namely, endeavour to diminish the greatness of this country, and enlarge its own; but, in proportion as they were disposed to be hostile to our interest, or querulous while we enjoyed our advantages, it was the wisdom of this country, in the same proportion, to wait until these claims were made which gentlemen spoke of with so much apprehension, and in the mean time to stand upon our paramount right of sovereignty. What course the

Digitized by Google

French would take to enlarge their commercial interest in India it was not for us to anticipate. It was enough for us, that if they endeavoured to do so by the exertions of individuals, or otherwise, they could never do so without being liable to be interrupted by this country. If they were to try to erect commercial factories, or to do any thing that interfered with our sovereignty in India, we should be fully warranted, and what was better, we were in possession of means to resist such an attempt. But those means would not be increased by a few papers being laid before the House; such documents would not help us to any arguments which we had not already, for the propriety of resisting such attempts. From all this it was perfectly clear, that before the French could exercise any trade in India, they must come to us in the character of suppliants. He had stated the difference between the treaty of 1783 and the convention of 1787, already. He had to observe, that we were not now in a situation similar to that in which we stood in 1787. There was now no treaty in existence between us and France, nor any regulation on the subject of India, except the single clause in the convention now upon the table. And with regard to the trade of France in India, if any they were to have, they could have it only through the indulgence of the British power in India; and therefore he said again, we were better off as the case stood upon the present treaty of peace, than if we had renewed any of the former treaties. Whatever matter of complaint was to be urged, or rather of lamentation, upon this subject, it could only be, that his majesty's government did not settle the whole of the provisions of all former treaties, by taking notice of them all, and finally adjusting them all. This, however, in the abstract it might appear desirable, ought not to have been attempted in the present case, because it would have been impossible to accomplish it, without protracting the negotiation to a length that would have been inconsistent with the interests of the states of Europe. The articles in these treaties must have been all gone over, if any of them were noticed; in the course of which a thousand explanations would become necessary, and which might have made the negotiation in many respects appear to some idle and ridiculous. But there were other considerations which, he hoped, would operate on those who may have the future conduct of the affairs of India; and they related to other powers, as well as to the French and ourselves in India; we were not to consider merely our own concerns and those of France in India. He stated it as a solid ground of consideration for the East India company, to regulate, not only the trade of the French, but to look to the regulation of other subjects, to have an eye upon other commercial connexions. But it might be said, Why not stipulate these things in negotiation, and finally determine them by treaty? To which he would answer, It is much better as it is; for at present we have the sovereignty of India: and he would ask, if it would be a wise course to exclude the government of this country from all discretionary power to regulate the trade of India? If the French, or any other power, should claim the right of carrying their goods up the Ganges, or to do any other act, was it not sufficient that we had the power to prevent them? The French trade in India, the Dutch trade in India, and the trade of other powers in India, might go hand in hand, so that it was not detrimental to us; but if detrimental to us, we had the power to stop it: and that was enough for our present purpose at least. He wanted this subject to be considered upon a large and comprehensive scale, and not confined merely to ourselves and France. He did not mean to insinuate, that he was in possession of the reasons which actuated his majesty's servants upon this occasion, when they came to the conclusion which was now before the public; but he felt himself entitled to state, that if they had done that which some gentlemen blamed them for not doing, they would have put it out of their own power to do their country much service; which they will now be enabled to render by consulting those who are best qualified to advise them, and that more especially on the affairs of India. But, when he heard it said that France was hostile in its disposition towards the trade of this country, and was endeavouring to prevail on Holland, Spain, and other countries, to do all they could to discourage our trade, and to prohibit some of it in their dominions, he would ask, are they so? And if they be, is this the precise period in which you would make them a voluntary gift of commerce to India, when you are doubtful in what relation they choose to stand with you

Digitized by Google

with regard to other commercial connexions? "I own," said he, "this is a subject on which I feel deeply. I am the last man in the world to plead for the system of this country narrowing the trade of foreigners in India. My maxim has been to enlarge that trade, and that we might as well attempt to prohibit foreigners from buying our manufactures of Yorkshire or of Birmingham, as prohibit foreigners from trading with our territories in India. But I should guard against misconception. When I say we should not prevent the French, or any other nation, from trading with our territorial provinces in India, I mean to say, that I am not afraid of them as merchants. I am not unwilling to give them a boon as merchants, with a chance of reciprocity, and I ask no more; but I think I am not going too far, when I desire this country to guard against that which I know the French have endeavoured to make, and will endeavour to make, if they see any probability of its success—I mean an encroachment on your sovereignty in India. This they have done; and if an opportunity offers, this they will do under the pretence of pursuing trade. They will ask you civilly, to allow them to do a number of things for the purpose of carrying on trade, when their object will be to encroach upon your sovereignty. It was in this way that they formerly endeavoured to encroach upon your sovereignty in 1787, when they told us they could not recover their debts without certain enlargement of power in India. We resisted that directly; and I hope this will be our conduct in future. The very first article insisted upon by lord Auckland in 1787 was, that nothing in the most distant degree touching our sovereignty in India would, on any terms, be assented to on the part of this country. I trust his majesty's government will stand upon the same ground as we did then; and if we do so, there will be no danger. Depart from that principle, and your sovereignty will be first undermined, then attacked, and finally overthrown. But we have not before us any proof, that the French nation are bringing forward any such claim as we here stated on their behalf. Will it not be time enough, when they do bring forward those claims, for government to resist them? But surely, when we agree that their claims are dangerous and cannot be admitted, it is singular to pursue this as a subject of declamation in the Houses of parliament. I say, this ought not to be done; for we all know, that what passes in parliament, transpires; and I cannot concur with those who wish to make the people of this country think the peace a bad one. I certainly cannot give an approbation of all the articles of peace; but is it doing good to this country to keep this question up, and to endeavour to make the people dislike it? Gentlemen complain of the pride and arrogance of France. Is this the way to make her less proud or arrogant? Certainly not."—Mr. Dundas refuted the observations of Dr. Laurence, on the subject of the danger to us in the Eastern seas, and on the apprehension he expressed concerning the claims of the Dutch, and then concluded—"I have stated what appeared to me to be the true substantial rights and interests of this country on the subject of Indian affairs; upon these rights and principles I desire to stand, and I have stated what course I think this country ought to pursue, to preserve those rights entire. I am aware that by so stating them, and by so recommending the course to be pursued, I impose on the shoulders of his majesty's government an awful and tremendous responsibility; for if you depart an iota from your sovereignty in India, and allow others to encroach on you, or any way to diminish the force of that paramount sovereignty, you will lay the foundation of the overthrow of your power in India. If, being possessed of that mighty empire, and of the means to assert and vindicate your right, you allow others to injure it by any act of executive government, I shall not receive any apology for the ministers who shall suffer that to be done under any pretence that the French had claimed these things before, or under any other pretence whatsoever, because you are now more than ever possessed of means to prevent it. I apprehend the learned gentleman is of the same opinion; and I hope he will concur with me in saying, that ministers, if they allow our sovereignty in India to be touched, will be without an apology, and that therefore he will be so good as to put his motion in his pocket."

The motion was supported by Mr. T. Grenville, opposed by lord Hawkesbury, and finally negatived.

Debate in the Lords on the Definitive Treaty of Peace.] May 13. Lord Grenville moved the order of the day for the

Digitized by Google

House to take into consideration the Definitive Treaty of Peace.

Earl *Stanhope* requested previously to say a few words. There were two grounds on which the order might be opposed; one by entering into a debate upon it, and the other by moving to discharge it. He should not move the reading of the order for the purpose of postponing it. It had been stated, no matter where, that the definitive treaty ought never to have been entered into—that circumstances had taken place between the signing the preliminary and the definitive treaty, which had entirely changed the relative situation of the two countries as they stood at the time the preliminary treaty was signed. The argument was founded principally on Buonaparté's having been appointed chief magistrate of the new Italian republic. By the argument it was inferred, that this was an act of dishonour on the part of the consul, and that as he had acted dishonourably in keeping the presidency of the new republic, it was not to be expected that he would hereafter act upon a different system; insinuating that, from the character of the man who was at the head of affairs in France, there was no reason to expect a continuance of the peace. He felt it his duty to combat such an argument. He maintained, that after the battles of Marengo and Hohenlinden, and the subsequent treaty with Austria, the influence of France over Italy was complete; and whatever alterrations had been since made, were mere matters of form, and not of substance. His reason for wishing the order of the day to be read was, not with a view to defer it, but that he might communicate that information to their lordships which he thought important, before the subject was discussed. He should first move the reading of the 130th standing order, for the exclusion of strangers. It was not his desire to preclude the public from hearing the debate; but, before the question was argued, he wished to submit some facts which he could not safely lay before their lordships without enforcing the order.

Strangers were ordered to withdraw. The subject of the noble earl's communication was, we understand the improved construction of a Diving Boat in France; which was described to be navigated under water with so much skill and certainty, as to make it easy for them to blow up a first-rate man of war with only fifteen pounds of powder. When strangers were re-admitted,

Lord *Grenville* was speaking on the subject of the definitive treaty of peace. His lordship said, he should offer no apology for having exerted his endeavours that their lordships might acquire previous information upon the different points to which the definitive treaty referred. The necessity and propriety of his conduct were so firmly impressed on his mind, that he was surprised at any insinuation of irregularity. The fact was; that himself and his noble friends had put the House in possession of arguments against the treaty, while those whose duty it was to have stated their reasons in its favour had not thought proper to defend it. The unfairness and irregularity, if any, was on the side of those who had reserved the detail of their arguments to a general debate, in which it was impossible to come to an issue on the various points connected with the subject. He was far from wishing to impute unfairness to any of their lordships. They had considered that discussion should not precede decision: he had thought that the best thing he could do was, to court repeated discussion previous to decision. In this situation the question was now submitted, and he rose to offer such a motion as resulted from the sentiments that he entertained. In doing this, the first argument with which he had to contend was one which had equally been resorted to in and out of the House. It was asked, what was the use of discussion now, when peace was concluded? Was it wished to overthrow the treaty? If not, what benefit could arise from debating upon the subject of it? He should be sorry to bring forward any motion, if he had it not in his power to meet such an argument. Whatever disadvantages might arise to the country from this unfortunate treaty, he would be one of the first to say, it was concluded by the power which had the right, by the constitution of the country, to conclude it; and therefore, whatever were its terms, parliament was bound to accede to it. It was ratified by his majesty, and the great seal of the kingdom affixed to it; consequently it was irrevocable; and not to carry it into effect would be to add dishonour to the loss occasioned by the treaty, and to impeach the national integrity. The first proposition he should make to the House was, to declare to his majesty their opinion, that the public

Digitized by Google

faith was pledged to the observance of the peace; that it was an obligation binding upon the country to maintain it inviolable. After such a declaration, what objection could possibly be urged against the discussion of the terms of the treaty? What inconvenience could result from pointing out the injurious effects likely to proceed from them? Why was he not to be allowed to urge the House to fix a mark upon those impolitic and weak ministers who had negotiated such a treaty, and whose counsels had concluded it? It was not his wish to interrupt the treaty now that it was made; but only to lay before the House the dangerous tendency of its provisions, that future ministers might be warned against advising a measure so disadvantageous to the country. The object of what he should state to their lordships was prospective—it was to ascertain the situation in which the country stood now the peace was settled, and its terms agreed to—it was to point out the state of danger in which the country was involved by the treaty—not for the purpose of shunning the danger, but of exciting the country to adopt the real line of courage by preparing to meet it. Such was the view with which he had desired the attendance of their lordships this day. He should propose to them to lay before his majesty an address, expressive of their determination to preserve inviolate the treaty; but, having done so, to represent to his majesty the state of the country, and the means of avoiding the danger which threatened it. This was what he conceived it was the duty of their lordships as legislators to perform; and it should be his task to point out his reasons for doing so. For this purpose, it was necessary to advert to the arguments which had been advanced against the preliminary articles, and the events which had taken place since. He had already stated to the House his objections to the preliminary treaty: if the definitive treaty had been conformable to the preliminary articles, and the relative situation of France and Spain had not altered by intervening circumstances, however he might have been disposed to have protested against the definitive treaty, he should not have thought it necessary to have proposed to the House the adoption of any new measure; but he found that all the grounds of the pretensions on the part of France, as contained in the preliminary treaty, had not only been confirmed by the definitive treaty, but exceeded. The terms of the latter were therefore infinitely more prejudicial than the former. He could not avoid calling the attention of the House to what had been the arguments used against the preliminary articles. It had been stated, that in all negotiations for peace there were two grounds or bases necessary to be adhered to: when after a long contest between two nations, the respective governments were considering how they might restore the blessings of peace and tranquillity, the basis on which the negotiation proceeded was, either the *status ante bellum*, the actual situation in which the parties stood before the war, or the situation in which they stood at the time of the negotiation, which was called the *uti possidetis*. Instead of the negotiators of the definitive treaty proceeding distinctly upon one of these grounds, they had applied both in the most prejudicial manner possible to this country. They had referred to the *status ante bellum* with regard to England, by giving up all she had taken during the war to France; and they had adopted the *uti possidetis* as to France, by leaving her in possession of all that she had acquired. It was obvious, that at the commencement of the negotiation each country was in possession of some advantage which operated to the disadvantage of the other. It was to our disadvantage that France possessed so much power on the continent; and it was to the disadvantage of France that we, by the superior skill and valour of our navy, were possessed of the colonies of France and Spain. The arrangement to have been desired was, that we should have diminished the power of France upon the continent, in proportion to our sacrifices with respect to the colonies that we had taken. If France could not have been persuaded to that, then it was our duty to have extended our maritime power, for the purposes of compelling her. As far as appeared by the treaty, ministers had made no attempt whatever to reduce the power of France on the continent, but had, by concessions abroad, given her the means of weakening our colonial strength. This was not acting upon the principle adopted by lord Chatham at the peace of 1763. That enlightened statesman had always considered, that every preliminary treaty should be as definitive as possible. If the preliminary articles of 1763 were compared with the definitive, it would appear

Digitized by Google

that there was scarcely any difference between them; while the direct contrary was the case with regard to the present treaty. By the incapacity of the negotiators, they had left themselves to treat with France during the pendency of a naval armistice. The question before that armistice was, whether this country would suffer the fleets of France, which were blockaded in the mouths of their harbours, to stir out. But what occurred immediately after the preliminary treaty? In direct opposition to our entreaties and threats, France sent an armament to the West Indies, and imposed on this country the necessity of also sending to the West Indies a naval force more than double any that we had sent during the war. Thus the first-fruits of the peace was the necessity of keeping an armament of thirty-five sail of the line in the West Indies.—He would not enter into the pretence, on the part of France, for sending the expedition that she did send; nor would he discuss the question whether it would or would not be better for this country if St. Domingo was under the dominion of France. He should only observe, that, the more urgent and pressing were the wishes of Buonaparté to send that armament, the more ought it to have been the policy of the negotiators on the part of this country to have insisted, that the French fleet should not have sailed till the preliminary articles were converted into a definitive treaty, and until he had afforded a conviction that he had no intention of obtaining such a cession as he had since obtained in Italy.—Something had been said of the time and temper in which the peace had been made on the part of France, and that it afforded a proof that the person at the head of the French government had become a harmless, inoffensive neighbour, and wished to show how much he had been misrepresented, when it had been insinuated that there were no bounds to his ambition. He would leave it to any man to say, whether, if peace depended upon the disposition of the republic, we should enjoy it, even for the length of time the present debate would occupy. It was evident the definitive treaty contained concessions infinitely more important than the preliminary articles; and it was no less true, that the conduct of the French government evinced a design to exclude the commerce of this country from the continent of Europe.—With respect to the situation in which Portugal had been placed by the definitive treaty, the House had been merely told that it was a pity it should be so; and, with regard to the prince of Orange, their lordships were informed by one of the servants of the crown, that he looked at the articles concerning that prince with regret. The indemnity to the prince of Orange was left in such a situation by the treaty, that it depended entirely upon France whether he should ever be indemnified or not. As to the Cape of Good Hope, not a word had been said, whether it would be advantageous to have it a free port or not. Why, after having stipulated that Malta should be independent, and that its independence should be guaranteed by one of the powers of Europe competent to its protection, was it placed under the guarantee of six powers, who never could be brought to agree upon the subject of it? How could Malta retain its independence? How was it possible that the expense of the garrison, stores, and charges of maintaining that fortress, could be provided by a power to whom no revenues were left? The expense of providing for Malta amounted to 130,000*l.* annually, while its revenues really applicable to that expenditure did not amount to more than 25,000*l.* The inference he drew from his statement was, that the election of the Grand Master must depend upon France, and that, in all probability, the whole island would shortly fall under the power of France.—He next adverted to an advantage given to the French with respect to the mutual cession of the colonies. It was stipulated, that the French inhabitants of Ceylon and Trinidad might retire from those islands, while nothing of the kind was admitted into the treaty with regard to the colonies that we ceded to France. His lordship contended, that by the non-renewal of the treaty of Utrecht this country had renounced the stipulation, that France should not acquire in Spanish America any privileges with reference to commerce that were not granted to England. It was needless to urge how much more important such a stipulation would have been at the present moment than at the period of the treaty of Utrecht. By the treaty of 1783, we had ceded Goree and Senegal; but at the same time the cession was under a stipulation for the liberty of carrying on the gum trade; but now the cession had been confirmed without the renewal of the stipulation. That it

Digitized by Google

was the intention of France to make war against our commerce, was evident from the circumstance of a decree having been issued by the government, forbidding the right of trading on the coast of that part of Africa. He should be glad if the suggestions he had stated could be repelled. If their lordships could be satisfied that the definitive treaty would not prejudice the rights of this country, then, if he could not approve of it, he should be ready to admit, that, the preliminary articles having been approved by parliament, it was bound to sanction the definitive treaty.—It had been acknowledged that the possession of Italy by France would justify a recurrence to a state of war—this was not his own argument, but the admission of the secretary of state. He now entreated the attention of the House to the situation in which the country stood at the time of the commencement of the negotiation. It was in a state of war, but under circumstances calculated as much as possible to alleviate its inconveniences. We had acquired the possession of colonies to an immense extent, which were valuable, not only from their military situation, but from their affording the means of carrying on the war itself. The produce of the West Indies had been 2,000,000*l.* annually, from which a very considerable revenue had arisen. This resource was lost. We had by our naval power obtained such a preference, that the fleets of France could not stir; now they had been suffered to proceed to the West Indies; and we were compelled to send an expensive armament to watch them. We were also in possession of resources sufficient to have enabled us to have carried on the war till we had obtained just, adequate, and reasonable conditions of peace. Had we availed ourselves of them? No; we had left to France the whole preponderating power of the continent, and had confirmed her in the possession of Italy. We had also added to France possessions of considerable importance in India, but had omitted to stipulate that they should not be fortified. We had given up to Holland the town and port of Cochin; a situation which the French would avail themselves of for the purpose of intrigue—one in which we should have most to apprehend from the attempts of France, and be least able to counteract them. His lordship maintained, that it was necessary, for the safety of our Indian possessions, that this country should have retained the sovereignty of the Cape. In order to be able to bring home our commercial fleets from India, or to send out troops, it would be always necessary to send a convoy, and then we should be insecure. In time of war, how was a single regiment to be sent? It was true, that troops might be sent directly from Great Britain to India, without touching at the Brazils or the Cape; but in such case they would not be fit for service for many months after they had landed. But the advantages we possessed in the sovereignty of the Cape was this—When the war broke out in the Mysore with Tippoo Sultan, we sent a corvette to the Cape, whence a force of fresh troops were dispatched fit for immediate service, landed, marched up the country, and were present at the siege of Seringapatam. It was not, he believed, too much to say, that, by ceding the Cape to Holland, we had, in point of fact, ceded it to the power of France. In the West Indies we had restored to France Martinique and Tobago, and had facilitated the means of recovering St. Domingo. She was besides in possession of Louisiana, and the fruitful country of Florida; for it was a circumstance too plain to admit of a doubt, that Spain never could keep Florida while France had possession of Louisiana. In addition to these advantages she had the means of entering Mexico at any time.—Such was the comparative situation of France and England in the East and West Indies and America. How did we stand with respect to the Mediterranean, the next seat of our naval interest? Our naval superiority in the Mediterranean was most important; but his majesty's ministers had placed the country in such a situation, that he defied any one to tell him how a single ship could be sent to the Mediterranean. By this policy they had dispossessed the country of Majorca, Minorca, and even the Island of Elba, which could only be useful to France for the purpose of excluding us from Leghorn. We were thus destitute of the means of maintaining any fleet in the Mediterranean. His majesty's ministers had put it out of the power of the king of Sardinia to open his ports to an English fleet. It was owing to the assistance afforded by the king of Naples and Sicily, that lord Nelson had been able to refit that fleet which had effected the overthrow of the French armament at Aboukir, and disappointed the

Digitized by Google

gigantic ambition of France. What was the return the English government had made to him for his assistance? It had procured a stipulation, that France should evacuate his dominions, but had not provided that she should not return whenever she thought proper. The inevitable consequence of such policy would be, that France would obtain the possession of Naples, and in the end we should find ourselves excluded by France from the whole commerce of the Levant. Every object of importance obtained by the valour of our navy had been surrendered by the counsels of those ministers who had made them pass into the hands of France. —Now to address their lordships on the subject of the defence made to these various charges—the defence rested on the ground of an imperious necessity for peace. In this defence, the noble lord who had advanced it was at least consistent, because he had uniformly maintained, that the country was not in a condition to strain every resource to carry on the war; but his majesty's ministers denied the existence of any such necessity. If it was true, that the country was under circumstances of imperious necessity, it was not astonishing that the definitive treaty should have been agreed to; but what security had we that France would suffer us to recover from that state of necessity to which she had reduced us? Such a plea on our part would only furnish a pretence for going on from sacrifice to sacrifice, from loss to disgrace, till at last we had nothing to contend for. It was to prevent this that he had brought forward the present motion, from which he was persuaded every advantage would be derived. It would have the effect of declaring to the public and to the enemy, that the country was not reduced to the necessity of making a disgraceful peace. In fact, such an argument as that founded upon necessity could not be raised by any country that was not prepared to receive the yoke of a conqueror. The question was, whether the advantages of the peace were greater than the disadvantages of the war? If it was expedient to have made this peace, it must have been so from the consideration that some advantage was obtained by it. The advantages might possibly be said to have proceeded from the extension of our commerce; or from enabling the country to adopt a system of economy; or from our having obtained some security for the continuance of peace. He should consider these points separately. With respect to our commerce, the peace must evidently have operated to the diminution of it. In support of this proposition, he referred to many observations respecting the acquisition of commercial power by France under the definitive treaty. Upon the question of economy, he contended, that in order to be able to husband our revenue, it was necessary that we should be able to protect it. With this view, he recommended government to keep a large naval and military establishment in a constant state of discipline. With regard to any naval establishment in the Mediterranean, ministers by their conduct had rendered it impossible to send a fleet there. It was with peculiar satisfaction he understood it was the intention of government to adopt the necessary measures of having a large channel fleet ready for actual service at forty-eight hours notice. With respect to security having been obtained for not going to war again, he could assure the House that no man wished more than himself that such might be the case. If it was not so, this country would have to commence a new war under every circumstance of disadvantage. If at the end of three campaigns we recovered what we had given up by the treaty, he should think we had made a most glorious war. Such was the situation in which the country stood; and he flattered himself that the House would concur with him in the propriety of considering how we might best resist the danger that threatened us. He feared the spirit of the country would be broken, unless its councils were directed by abler men. He had deemed it necessary to desire the House to carry a declaration to the foot of the throne, containing a resolution, that the House was ready to attend to every practicable economy calculated to enable this country to resist every future attempt on the part of the enemy; but that, in order to do so, it would be necessary to have a scale of defence sufficient to meet the danger.—The noble lord next adverted to the question of the right of the British flag in the navigation of the Eastern seas, and the claims of France and Holland to carry on a free and independent trade. He observed, that although this country might be disposed to treat such claims as ridiculous, Holland and France might not do so. If it should be necessary to maintain a war in India for the sovereignty of the

Digitized by Google

territory, he should consider such war as just and necessary; but the question was, whether France and Holland would entertain the same opinion? Perhaps the very ship that carried out the orders to give up the factories to the French, might bring back an account of actual hostilities. He deprecated the consequences of a war in India, particularly at a time when the East India directors had stated that the company was too poor to instruct their own servants in the rudiments of their business. The noble lord again adverted to the impolicy of suffering the treaties to expire, recapitulated his arguments, and expressed his intention of introducing into the Address a hope that no time might be lost in settling, by amicable adjustment, those points which had not been arranged by the definitive treaty. He concluded by moving,

"That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, to assure his majesty, that we have taken into our most serious consideration the treaty of peace, which his majesty has been graciously pleased to communicate to this House:

"That we acknowledge, with all humility and submission, his majesty's undoubted prerogative of peace and war; and that we shall consider it to be our first duty, as far as may depend on us, to maintain inviolate the public faith, as it is pledged by this treaty, and to assist his majesty in performing, with uprightness and punctuality, those engagements into which his majesty has been advised to enter.

"But that we cannot conceal the painful apprehensions with which we consider the result of those engagements, nor can we forbear to offer to his majesty our humble and dutiful advice for the adoption of such measures as can alone, in our opinion, under the blessing of Providence, avert from us the dangers with which we are now surrounded:

"That it is impossible for us to have seen, without the utmost anxiety and alarm, all the unexampled circumstances which have attended the final conclusion of the present peace:—The extensive and important sacrifices, which, without any corresponding concession, this treaty has added to those already made on our part by the preliminary articles:—the unlooked-for and immense accessions of territory, influence, and power, which it has tacitly confirmed to France:—the numerous subjects of clashing interest, and unavoidable dispute which it has left entirely unadjusted;—and, above all, those continued and systematic projects of aggrandizement, of which, in the very moment of peace, we have seen, unhappily, such undeniable and convincing evidence:

"That, by relinquishing so many sources of prosperity in peace, and so many bulwarks of defence in war, and, by renouncing, at the same time, the advantage and security always hitherto derived from the accustomed renewal of former treaties, the British government has imposed on itself a greater necessity than has ever before existed for measures of increased precaution, and for determinations of unshaken constancy:

"That we therefore rely on his majesty's paternal wisdom, for a watchful and unremitted attention to the situation and future conduct of the power with whom we have negociated; and we think it necessary more especially to assure his majesty, of our ready and firm support in that determination, which, we trust, his majesty will henceforward pursue, of resisting every fresh encroachment, of whatever nature, which shall be attempted in the maritime, commercial, or colonial rights and interests of the British empire:

"This our solemn declaration must, as we believe, materially conduce to prevent the necessity which it is calculated to meet: and we trust that his majesty will also approve of our desire to support it by a scale of naval and military defence, adequate to the extent of our danger, and to the importance of the interests which we have to maintain:

"The anxiety which we feel in this respect, is the necessary consequence of our sincere wish for the permanence of the public tranquillity, which his majesty has now re-established: And it is for the same important purpose, that we also most earnestly recommend to his majesty's wisdom the pressing necessity of arranging, by immediate and amicable discussion, those points of essential interest which had been adjusted by former treaties, but for which no provision has been made in this negotiation:

"These counsels we submit to his majesty with confidence, in the present awful crisis of public affairs, prepared to meet with firmness all the difficulties and dangers of our present situation, but desirous, above all things, to promote the stability

Digitized by Google

and security of real peace; the object which it has been his majesty's benevolent desire, by such extensive sacrifices, to ensure to his loyal and affectionate people."

The Duke of *Norfolk* said, he differed very much from the noble lord who had preceded him. He approved highly of that exercise of the royal authority by which the late ministers were dismissed from power. They had involved this country in all the calamities which she had for years experienced, and therefore deserved all the disgrace which had been inflicted on them. With regard to the peace, he gave it his hearty approbation, as likely to produce all the blessings which could be expected from such a happy event. It did not meet with his concurrence because he thought it unexceptionable, but because he believed that any peace would be much more beneficial to mankind than the continuance of such a war. Our fleets and armies had certainly by their glorious achievements, raised the national character—great and glorious as it was in history—far beyond what the warmest patriot could have expected. But, with all that splendor of achievement, he preferred peace, as more conducive to the true interest and happiness of mankind. The noble peer who had made the motion now before their lordships, had indicated feelings of umbrage, if not of hostility, to the nation with whom we had lately concluded peace. Whatever the noble lords sentiments were, he for one, wished it to be understood, that, for the preservation of that peace which we had so lately accomplished, we ought to cultivate every mode of conciliation and friendship. The ideas, however, which had now been suggested, were indicative of the determination of the ex-ministers, should they ever return to power. Instead of confirming this peace with the drawn sword against the nation with whom we were lately at war —we ought to use every effort to remove all doubt, on their part, as to our sincerity. The peace had now been concluded, the national faith plighted; and he hoped never to witness a violation of the treaty, however disadvantageous it might be considered by many noble peers, whose opinions were opposite to those of the present administration. He was no friend to the measures of those in power, but he was a sincere friend to peace. To remove all jealousy and fear on the part of France, he would therefore earnestly recommend some motion in approbation of the peace. The noble duke, by way of amendment to the Address, moved to leave out all after the first two paragraphs, which went to acquaint his majesty of their having taken the definitive treaty into consideration, and their resolution to aid him in carrying it into effect.

Lord *Pelham* endeavoured to remove the objections which had been advanced by lord Grenville, who had, he said, in a very elaborate speech, attempted to excite sentiments adverse, not only to the present peace, but apparently to every kind of peace whatever. The preliminaries were not, in his opinion, so very different from the definitive treaty: the spirit, if not the letter, was preserved; and, as our national faith was pledged, he conceived that no man who was hostile to peace, could be friendly to the interests of the country. The noble lord seemed to be instigated by such a spirit of opposition to the peace, as if he were resolved, that there should be no peace at all. With regard to the little island of Elba, he conceived it unworthy of contest, and therefore would not detain their lordships by a long disquisition on that subject. As to Malta, it was to be restored to the order of St. John of Jerusalem, and its independence and perpetual neutrality acknowledged, under the guarantee of Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia, Spain, and Prussia. Such an arrangement was perfectly consonant to the wishes of those who were highly esteemed for their intelligence and patriotism. Perhaps it would have been more agreeable to the policy of some, if Russia had taken possession of Malta; and why at one time such an arrangement had been postponed or neglected, was best known to the emperor, who had, in the settlement of differences, conducted himself in the most liberal manner. Many were of opinion, that his becoming one of the guarantees was a greater security for the independence of the Maltese, and consequently the peace of Europe, than the adoption of the other arrangement mentioned. Our possessions in the East and West Indies were much strengthened by the acquisitions which we had attained from the peace; and whatever apprehensions certain noble lords might entertain for the safety of our settlements in the East, when contemplating even the supposed ambitious views of the French go-

Digitized by Google

nent, he dismissed all such idle fears ıce from his mind, as unworthy of us reflection. Our sovereignty in the was acknowledged and confirmed by us treaties, and therefore any appre- ons on that head were nugatory in xtreme. With regard to the state e prince of Orange, his claims had by eans been abandoned; but it ought recollected, that, however powerful laims were on our generosity as an nd faithful ally, he could not now be dered as a sovereign; and therefore demnity for the losses which he had ined could not be recommended on a principle of compensation. For possessions which he had held inde- ently of the States, he would certainly ve an adequate compensation from who had the control of public affairs lolland. Ministers were, therefore, o blame when the claims of the house range were called in question. They acted with every attention to the ts of that prince, who had so faithfully luctedhimself for the interests of this ıtry, and that of our allies. Great ıusies and fears had been expressed he subject of our commercial in- sts, as if we could, on the termina- of hostilities, expect that the same nt of commerce would remain to us, ch we enjoyed, by the gallantry of our ıen during the war. His lordship n earnestly recommended, that no s of a hostile nature to France should irculated as if sanctioned by the Bri- government, which was zealously re- ed to use its best exertions for the ivation of peace and friendship be- en the two countries. Every measure pted by government on such an im- ant subject, certainly challenged the stigation of any noble peer; but he ld not help remarking, that the noble who now appeared in opposition to peace might have chosen another time ally well adapted for his purpose.— d Pelham, before he sat down, inti- ed his intention of submitting to their lships, as soon as the preceding motion amendment were disposed of, ano- r motion for an address to his ma- y, approving of the definitive treaty under discussion.

ord *Mulgrave* said, he should support motion of the last noble peer when- r he brought it forward. On this oc- ion, he had no hesitation to differ n his noble friend (lord Grenville), because he was conscious that in so doing he was discharging his duty to his coun- try. His noble friend had dwelt much in condemnation of the arrangement for Malta. He, however, thought that every candid man would acknowledge the error of the noble peer, who had given the most unqualified reprobation of the peace. Malta, luckily for the interest and happi- ness of Europe, was to be restored to the Maltese, who were best able, under the guarantee of the powers mentioned, to govern that island. He could not con- ceive any solid ground for entertaining suspicions of the sincerity of France, so far as related to the fulfilment of the treaty; neither was he in the least alarmed at the supposed inordinate ambi- tion of Buonaparté. He wished it to be fully understood by France, that neither the British government nor British people had the most remote intentions of violating the national faith so solemnly pledged. He saw no needless sacrifices which we had made for the attainment of Peace. It could not, by any reasonable man, be sup- posed, that on the return of that desirable event, we were not to make some sacri- fice as an inducement for France to agree to terms of pacification. Notwithstand- ing all the sacrifices which we had made, there still remained to us great advantages, both in the East and West Indies, by the acquisition of Ceylon and Trinidad; but he confessed, that he could not contem- plate the state of St. Domingo without serious apprehensions of danger to our settlements in the West Indies. It was evident, that whether Buonaparté subdued Touissaint, or formed a treaty of friendship with him, or whether Touissaint expelled the French from that island, the result would be the same to the British interests in the West Indies. It was also as evi- dent, that a very numerous and powerful black army would be retained for the emergencies of the state. An army of Europeans would not be able to encounter the dangers and difficulties incident to such a station as St. Domingo. The con- sequence would be, that necessity would oblige us to keep up a military establish- ment, able to cope with that of France or Touissaint. As to the resources of this country, they were capable of answering every emergency of the state, even on the renewal of a war equally bloody with that which had now terminated. But our es- tablishments ought to be in proportion to our resources; as we could not, perhaps,

Digitized by Google

render our resources, immense as they were, adequate to prodigal establishments. He earnestly recommended that we should embrace every opportunity of cultivating a permanent peace with France.

Lord *Auckland* said, that the definitive articles on the table formed the closing scene of a war, into which, as he had often asserted, not from conjecture nor from argument, but from a positive knowledge of the fact, we were unavoidably forced. We were forced into it not merely for the preservation of other allied states; not merely for the support of those principles of civil and religious order which are essential to the well-being of mankind, but for the defence of our own constitution, and for our independence and existence as a free nation. The struggle had been long and most severe; he could, however, look back to the whole course and conduct of it with fair national pride. With respect to dominion, we had lost nothing, and had finally made and secured to ourselves acquisitions of great importance. With respect to national character, it might be said, without vaunting, that our navy and armies had been raised to a pitch of glory unexampled in all the histories of mankind. And lastly, our great object had been attained in the entire preservation of that constitution, and of those blessings resulting from the best of all governments, which our enemies, foreign and domestic, had attempted to destroy. Under this impression of the war, and of its consequences, he felt more disposed to consider the means of maintaining our actual pre-eminence among nations, than to examine, rigidly and repiningly, whether the terms of peace were such as in the course of the war he might have wished and expected. Whatever opinions, therefore, he might have avowed respecting the wise and just policy of declining all pacification till we had reduced the enormous and growing power of France, and had restored independence to the continental states;—whatever he might have thought, even since the epoch of the preliminaries, as to the expediency of continuing our exertions till we had obtained for ourselves at least, a solid and unequivocal security;—whatever he might now think, if he were to balance the expence, pressure and distresses of a prolonged war, against the distrusts, agitations, and dangers of an insecure pacification—he nevertheless saw and acknowledged the general wish and impatience of his countrymen to withdraw themselves from a state of war, and to make the best peace that relative circumstances would allow. How that general wish had arisen was a question which he would not at present investigate. He respected the public opinion; and the definitive treaty having been signed and ratified, ought to be executed with that scrupulous honour and good faith, which were, in peace as well as in war, the best and proudest distinctions of our national character.—It was now become his duty, as a peer of parliament, to quit all asperity of expression in regard to the people who were lately our enemies; to promote conciliation; and to remove all probable causes of misunderstanding. With these views he had called their lordships' attention to the effects and consequences of the non-renewal of a long list of treaties, which it had been the practice of more than a century to renew; and more especially to the separate consideration, whether it was desirable to renew the treaty of 1787, respecting the exercise and conduct of the French commerce in the East Indies. He had looked into the works of all the first publicists on these subjects, and had corrected himself in a mistake still prevalent in the minds of many, who state, in an unqualified sense, that all treaties between nations are annulled by war, and must be specially renewed if meant to be in force on the return of peace. It is true, that treaties, in the nature of compacts or concessions, the enjoyment of which has been interrupted by the war, and has not been renewed at the pacification, are rendered null by the war. But compacts not interrupted by the course and effect of hostilities, such as the regulated exercise of a fishery on the respective coasts of the belligerent powers; the stipulated right of cutting wood in a particular district; or possessing rights of territory heretofore ceded by treaty, are certainly not destroyed or injured by the war. On the other hand, there are cases in which treaties may be dissolved without any specific breach, and without any war between the parties. He would, suppose that we had not made war against Holland on her entire revolution and change of constitution and system; still our antecedent treaties with her would have been dissolved, by her incapacity to maintain the relations to which those treaties were meant to apply. And, therefore, it is stated by

Digitized by Google

el and other writers, that treaties whenever an essential alteration place in either of the contracting es. And this doctrine will apply to ate treaties with Savoy, Swisserland, ther countries, which are temporary as to the French revolution.—He l now state certain inferences to be n from these general positions, after ving that in the definitive articles, is not any provision, direct or in-, for the renewal of treaties which ubsisted before the war. And he l more especially advert to certain which had been urged by other no-rds, beyond what he conceived to be nted by sound reason or by the law ions. And first, with respect to nd:—It is not true that our non-al of the Dutch treaties will liberate ips and vessels of that republic from cient practice of striking their flag tish ships of war in the British seas. practice did not depend on the of 1784, nor even on the treaty of , in 1667. Those treaties were recognitions of an existing right, e treaty of 1667 expressly stated, the Dutch flag shall be struck in manner as the same hath been for-observed in any time whatsoever." me remark would be found applica-the sixth article of the treaty of by which "the States General pro-not to obstruct the navigation of itish subjects in the Eastern seas." rticle was no compact or grant; it ly an acknowledgment of a pre-g and undoubted right; and was meant as a notice to our mer-, that they would not be disturbed exercise of their right.—Next with to Spain. He acknowledged that mmercial treaties with that country t and gone; but it is equally cer-at those treaties had ceased to be ed long before the war; and he add, from personal experience, had acquiesced in their being dis-d by the Spanish government. he cession to France of the Spanish St. Domingo, and of Louisiana, seen it with concern; but he saw t it could not have been prevented or ed by a renewal of former treaties; cession, in both instances, had lace when the eighth article of the of Utrecht had been rendered null war, and before it could be revived article in the pacification. It had been asserted by some noble lords, that by the non renewal of treaties, and the consequent loss of the treaty of 1786, our right to cut logwood might be brought into doubt and dispute. Those noble lords ought to have drawn a contrary inference. He had already stated the incontrovertible principle, that treaties or compacts, the exercise of which are not interrupted by the course of the war, remain in full effect on the return of peace. Our privileges in the bay of Honduras had been given in lieu of ancient and acknowledged rights in the bay of Campeachy. Those privileges having been enjoyed without disturbance, during the war, are confirmed and established.—Lastly, with respect to France. The non-renewal of the commercial treaty of 1786 naturally presented itself to his observation. His parental affections, however, did not extend to his treaties; they did not influence him so far as to make him regret the loss of the treaty alluded to. It had already passed through its limited period, and had no claim to a renewal, unless our negociator at Amiens could have persuaded the French government that the French manufacturers are able, in 1802, to resume the competition to which they found themselves unequal in 1786, under the tariffs then settled. On our part also, it would have been necessary to reduce the wine duties to the specified amount at which they were fixed by the treaty of 1786; we must consequently have sacrificed the duties imposed during the war, which produce above a million sterling. He could not, however, quit this part of the discussion, without expressing his surprise, that any statesman can consider commercial treaties as of small importance to commerce. He believed himself to be fully aware of the great effects of capital, of energy, and of enterprise, but he knew, at the same time, that commercial treaties are most beneficial to trade, by regulating the terms of competition, by giving personal protection, and by other collateral advantages and encouragements. In support of these opinions, he would confidently appeal to the manufacturers of Birmingham, Staffordshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Paisley, who well recollect the benefits derived, during six years, from the French commercial treaty.—Thus far he had spoken only of certain detached interests as affected by the non-renewal of treaties. It had, however, been observed, that the great and venera-

Digitized by Google

ble mass of treaties, which had so long constituted the title-deeds of so many states and empires, is utterly lost and gone. Unhappily this assertion is true. The most important acts of diplomacy, accomplished by the most enlightened of our ancestors, during a period of two centuries, are now left to moulder in dust, or to be drawn forth only for the curiosity and researches of historians. But this event, deplorable as it may be, is not caused by an omission in the definitive articles, but by the fate of war, by the existing circumstances of nations by the inscrutable decisions of Providence. The customary stipulation for the renewal of treaties had ceased to be applicable to the new order of things on the continent of Europe. It would be fastidious and fatiguing to their lordships to enter into a detailed examination of the treaties proposed to be provided by the project delivered at Lisle; but one example might serve, and he would entreat their lordships to refer to the treaty of peace concluded at Utrecht. In that treaty, as in all others, there are several articles for the purpose of replacing the contracting parties in all the relations of peace and amity. The other provisions are, a disclaimer on the part of France, of the Pretender's family which is now extinct; a renunciation of the king of Spain to the crown of France; a renunciation of the duke of Orleans to the crown of Spain; a stipulation for the demolition of Dunkirk; a promise of just and reasonable satisfaction to all the allies of Great Britain; an article for the freedom of the city of Dantzig, now annexed to the Prussian dominion; and the treaty closes with the accession of the grand duke of Tuscany, the duke of Savoy, and the duke of Parma; all which powers are now either absorbed in revolutionary arrangements, or swallowed up by France. The treaties of Ryswick in 1697, of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, of Paris in 1763, and of Versailles in 1783, would be found equally irreconcileable to the present state of things. And surely the French plenipotentiaries at Lisle had the best of the argument with lord Malmesbury, when they objected to the renewal of treaties as irrelevant, contradictory to existing circumstances, and calculated only to create difficulties and confusion. In saying this, he desired at the same time to render both to lord Malmesbury and to the noble lord who had instructed him, that tribute of admiration and of gratitude, which is due to distinguished and superior talents, honourably exerted in a crisis most essential to the best interests of the British empire.—He now came to the consideration which had principally induced him to enter into the present discussion. It had been stated to their lordships, from great and respectable authorities, that our rights and interests in India might be affected by the non-renewal of the convention of 1787. Being convinced that this apprehension was groundless, and feeling at the same time that a misconception of the subject might convulse the most valuable and most essential of our possessions, he had long been desirous to lay before their lordships some facts and reasonings, of which he had an immediate and personal knowledge, and which he trusted must give full satisfaction to every unprejudiced mind. He found it impossible to add strength to the unequivocal and forcible language in which the noble lords opposite to him had asserted our sovereignty in India. That sovereignty had been acquired and established in a war forced upon us by the unjust and violent aggression of Serajah Dowlah, at that time the effective sovereign of Bengal. It had been confirmed and extended by subsequent grants, conquests, and treaties. It had been recognized by all the powers of Europe and of India, who have accepted and enjoyed privileges from us in our character of sovereigns. In that character we have maintained a uniform and decided, and undisturbed possession during forty years; and few of their lordships could produce a better title to their private estates. We support this right of sovereignty by a powerful and adequate force. Thus, then, we stand circumstanced with every advantage of conquest, grants, acknowledgement, long possession, and power. "True," say the noble lords, "but you are confounding the right with claims which controvert that right; you confound it with claims which the French East India Company heretofore asserted, which your convention of 1787 had quieted, but which will now be awakened, and revive. Here you plead to an audience already convinced; the question is whether France will be convinced." To such insinuations he could only reply, that France must be convinced, unless she meant to seek an unprincipled and extravagant ground of quarrel. France is bound by the law of nations both in India,

Digitized by Google

and elsewhere: by that law she must return to the situation recognised and established before the war, and not derogated from by the treaty of pacification. Their lordships would recollect, that by the 13th article of the treaty of Paris, in 1783, the king engaged to take such measures as should be in his power for securing to the subjects of France in India, a safe, free, and independent trade, such as was carried on by the French East India Company, whether they exercised it individually or united in a company. Before any adjustment could be made in Europe in consequence of that article, the servants of the French Company thought proper to set up various obsolete and obnoxious claims. They refused even to submit to the search of their ships in going up the Ganges; and one of their vessels, a sloop of war, was driven a shore, and sunk by our cannon, with the loss of one of her crew. These disagreements and their consequences were reported early in 1786 to the French ministers, when he (lord Auckland) was in habits of daily intercourse with them on other subjects. In the mean time colonel Cathcart (an officer of the highest hopes, if his life had been spared by Providence) was deputed by the Bengal government to the French chief governor, the Vicomte de Souillac, at Mauritius. An adjusted reference of the points in dispute was entered into between them, and was brought by colonel Cathcart to Europe. That instrument was considered by the king's government as utterly inadmissible, and he (lord A.) received instructions to disclaim it, and at the same time to open a negotiation explanatory of the commercial advantages and protection which his majesty would be disposed to give to the French subjects in the East Indies. His proceedings met with some interruption from the illness and death of that enlightened minister the comte de Vergennes, who in all their conferences had admitted the British sovereignty in India. But on the 1st of March 1787, he (lord A.) delivered to the comte de Montmorin a paper, entitled, "Explication Confidentielle," which their lordships would be pleased to hear. [He proceeded to read it accordingly.] The purport of that paper was, that the proposed convention must rest on the basis of the entire and undisputed sovereignty of Great Britain in India; and that France could be admitted to treat as having commercial interests only. In the subsequent arrangement of the articles, he had refused to insert any stipulation as to the duties to be paid in India by the French vessels, and also as to certain points of interior jurisdiction; lest such admissions should seem to imply any derogation from our rights of sovereignty. And, for the same reason, he had specifically refused to give a small provision to the family of the man who had been unfortunately killed by our cannon on board the French vessel in the Ganges; although such a provision had been stipulated in the agreement signed at the Mauritius. He thought it material to mention farther, that, previous to the signing the convention, and with that explicit frankness which he had maintained through the whole negotiation, he communicated to the French ministers a copy of the letter prepared by the Board of Control in England, and proposed to be sent with the convention to the supreme government in Bengal. That letter, the work of persons to whom their country has great and eternal obligations (Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas), stated unequivocally that we had considered the French subjects in India as having no existence there, but as inhabitants of factories for mere commercial purposes, and subject to all the restrictions and regulations which the exercise of our sovereignty might impose. The convention thus originated, thus constructed, and thus explained, was signed on the 30th August, 1787, and was afterwards ratified. And, from that period to the opening of the war, six years afterwards, it guided and governed without disturbance the whole course of the French commerce and French existence in India. What, then, must be the consequence of the non-renewal of a treaty so circumstanced, and of a relative situation so recognised and established, previous to the commencement of the war? He could not hesitate to assert, that the consequence with respect to us would be a strengthening, if it were possible, of our exercise and right of empire. The consequence with respect to France would be, if we were disposed to enforce it, the evident loss and implied renunciation of all the advantages and privileges which the convention of 1787 had given to her, He could not hesitate to add, that France retains no possible claim in India beyond the peaceable possession of the factories restored to her, and such liberal protection as may be granted by us to every

Digitized by Google

nation with which we are at peace.—He found it impossible to close this subject without referring to the marquis Wellesley, whose provident and energetic mind had done so much towards extending and strengthening our Indian empire. That noble person, who had made such gigantic strides in the paths of fair conquest and of glory, would indeed be much astonished if he were told that, because our forty years sovereignty is not recited in the definitive articles, it may be questioned by a power which holds Brabant, Flanders, Savoy, and great parts of Germany and Italy, by the mere pretension of recent conquests. Still it may be repeated again and again, that France may revive her old and litigated claims; and so she certainly may. She may claim Gibraltar and Jamaica; she may assert a right to the free navigation of the Thames; but if she be disposed to bring forward absurd and hostile pretensions, will any clause in any treaty prevent her? If she be disposed to dispute our Indian empire, would the renewal of the convention of 1787 be an obstacle?—He would pursue the discussion no farther; nor would he have said so much if he had not thought it a duty, on a question of such essential importance, to clear away every possible doubt. He hoped and trusted that France, for her own sake, would show herself capable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity with other states: and that with the name of peace we shall gradually obtain all the attributes, and all the blessings and security of peace. If she be fairly disposed to heal the wounds of war, and to make compensation for those calamities which she has, during so many years, accumulated on mankind, she will now act towards us, not only in India but in every part of the world, with the same spirit of conciliation, and with the same good faith, which she is sure to experience at our hands. He, for one, however, would watch her conduct, both in the East and in the West, with jealousy, but without acrimony; with anxiety, but without fear. It had often been remarked, with respect to the great events and conjunctures of human life, that they are seldom either so good or so bad as they seem to be in their first impression. The strange occurrences of the last ten years had shown the fallibility of political speculations, and had taught him a due diffidence both in his own judgment and in the judgment of others. Still, however, he knew, beyond all possible doubt, that though we have made great sacrifices for peace, we retain every advantage of internal prosperity and extensive dominion: and that though his countrymen had been somewhat impatient for peace, still that the national spirit is unbroken, and as high as ever. The sense of our naval and military glories will long be warm upon our minds. We know the effect and force of the public resources and the public energy. We know that, in despite of all the expense of the war, we have already a sinking fund of nearly six millions sterling. We are prepared to resist and repel any real injury, and the United Kingdom (in that word alone we are indemnified for a great proportion of the expenses of the war) will remain happy, pre-eminent, and unassailable, as long as she shall remain true to herself, to her sovereign, and to her constitution.

The Earl of *Carnarvon* said:—If parliament could remain silent after the communication of the definitive treaty, without an implied approbation and admission, that it was adequate to the just expectations of the country, and consistent with the honour and dignity of the national character, he might have been glad that public discussion could have been avoided, in the perilous state in which this ill-omened peace has placed us; but the very dangers with which we are threatened, and the peculiar circumstances attending this peace, makes it the duty of parliament, not to shrink from the investigation of our alarming position under the operations of the definitive treaty, to which the public faith has been pledged by the king's ministers, but to examine and point out the errors committed, and the future dangers to which those errors must expose us, and in some such terms as the noble mover has suggested, keep awake the watchful eye of jealousy to secure all that is not yet surrendered to France, though left exposed to her ambition, and her talents for cavil. Nothing in the situation of the two countries, or in the events of the war, had prepared us for terms so disgraceful and humiliating. With all possible respect for the private virtues of those who compose the present administration, I could not look with confidence, or trust to their experience or abilities, for security amidst the difficulties which surrounded us; the country at large felt more astonishment than confidence, when, on their accession

Digitized by Google

to power, they desired not to be judged incapable of the arduous task they had undertaken, till they had been tried and found deficient; they seemed to think it of trivial importance to the public, whether the state vessel, exposed to the most turbulent and dangerous sea with which it had ever been assailed, should be entrusted to known and approved abilities, or to persons who had never arrested the attention of the public, till they were placed where their errors might be irretrievably fatal to the country. They no sooner occupied the helm, than, as if inexperience was essential to the management of public interests, they pressed to their aid a noble lord, beloved indeed by all men, but one whom flattery would not venture to qualify with the character of an able and experienced negociator: thus seconded, they undertook the conduct and management of the most intricate and involved interests, and opposed their private virtues and unpractised abilities to the crafty experience of men, who for nine long years of duplicity and chicanery, had practised on the hopes, fears, and credulity, of the whole world, till by force and cunning, unrestrained by any moral virtue, they had raised their country to that formidable eminence, from which they impressed, with terror and mistrust, every nation with whom they had any political relations. Under such unequal negociators some disadvantages might naturally be expected, though the two nations were placed by the war in situations of no great disparity, though the respective countries felt equally the oppressions and burthens of the war, and looked with equal ardour for the blessings of peace. The preliminary articles, however, or rather the catalogue of uncompensated advantages to France and her allies, at the expense of Great Britain and her allies, staggered the most desponding advocates for peace; but the earnest wish for the return of its blessings, for the revival of all the relations of amity, and the peaceful renewal of friendly and commercial intercourse, and the extinction of all the horrors of war, overweighed all other considerations, and the preliminary articles, approved by no person, gave a species of joy to all classes, not indeed without hopes, and even assurances, that some articles respecting our allies, affecting our national honour, would be altered. But the definitive treaty has destroyed all those hopes; for it has only heaped concession on concession, and added disgrace to our disgrace, and even contrived to remove all security for those rights which still remain unconceded, and, with the security to those rights, they have removed even the hopes of stability from that peace, which they have purchased by such large concessions. They have wilfully deviated, or (which I rather suspect to be the case) submitted to a deviation from the uniform practice and caution of their predecessors, by not renewing all former treaties applicable to the present state of affairs; for it is no answer to say, as my noble friend has just observed, that many treaties formerly renewed bear no possible relation to existing circumstances. By the omission to renew any treaties, ministers have, as far as in them lay, unadjusted all former adjusted disputes, and this they themselves seem to admit, and, what is more extraordinary, claim merit for it; at least, they have left us to the honour and justice of France, without the customary acknowledgment of our rights, or a pledge that she would not dispute them hereafter. They have thrown such mystery over this part of their conduct, and have defended themselves so ambiguously on this subject, that it is difficult to understand whether they avow this omission as a deliberate act of theirs, productive of advantages which they sought, and have obtained ingeniously, over the baffled negociators of France; or whether, on the contrary, they have more prudently sought the renewal, and weakly submitted to a positive refusal on the part of France. The country have a right to know the truth; and I call upon them, in fairness, to declare on what footing this omission stands; for whatever may be the opinions of noble lords on the first supposition, it must follow from the last, that the deliberate refusal to renew any treaty is a distinct abrogation and a distinct reservation of formerly-adjusted discussions and disputes.—On the former supposition of a simple omission to renew treaties, I shall make a few observations, as I do not quite coincide in opinion with my noble relation, though I concur with him in the inference. It has been nearly admitted by ministers, that former treaties, by the omission of renewal, are abrogated: my noble relation does not go that length, but he thinks we have lost our title-deeds in most cases, and has affirmed, that we have thereby totally lost the gum trade. I am far from thinking any of these consequences follow simply from the tacit omis-

Digitized by Google

sion of the renewals. War does not abrogate any right, or interfere with the right, though it does with the exercise, but such as it professes to litigate by the war. It suspends, it is true, all relations of amity and commerce, all amicable intercourse; but nothing seems so obvious to common sense, as that peace has the same effect upon war, as war on the preceding peace, namely, that it removes all its operations; war oppresses all the relations of peace, peace removes all that pressure; the oppressed energies of peace revive. The subject whose litigation made the war, must be adjusted by the treaty of peace which terminates the war, or it would continue to be a subject undecided, and consequently subject to renewed litigation; but no reason can be shown, why formerly adjusted disputes, which have made no part of the reason of the the last war, should be re-adjusted; they may be the subject of revision at the will of the parties, but are not necessarily so. All the writers on the law of nations distinctly affirm, that peace has only relation to the war which it terminates, leaving all the former relative situations of the two countries as before the war; and that former treaties, though not expressly renewed, remain in full effect, if not expressly abrogated in the treaty of peace, or by private consent and acknowledgment. The uniform practice of renewing treaties makes some little deduction from the force of this doctrine, and leaves no excuse for ministers who have neglected the security from renewed treaties, when they might have obtained it. If, as I suspect, it has been refused by France to our requisition, the advantages of the peace, and its stability, stand upon a different footing from that which has been made known to parliament. We may have rights founded on the best title, supported by the best arguments, but we have no undisputed rights, all former disputes being let loose. The stability of peace depends more upon acknowledged and undisputed rights, than upon good and sufficient title. The noble secretary, who did not attempt to answer any of the objections so ably detailed by my noble relation, in lieu of argument, supposes that the whole drift of the noble mover's speech and motion had been against any peace on any terms—a supposition justified by no one sentence which he uttered. He certainly considered the peace as inadequate to our fair expectations, but that, such as it was, the country was pledged to its observance. He complained that the definitive treaty was rather the preliminary of war, than a confirmation of peace. He unanswerably proved, that we were exposed to the renewal of disputes endangering peace, by not renewing treaties which had adjusted them. In which of these positions the noble secretary finds an objection to the termination of the war on any terms, is not easily to be imagined. With respect to the loss of right to the gum trade, by the omission to renew the treaty which relates to it, I wish to say a few words. If I am right, that peace, by removing the pressure of war (except as far as conquest has altered possession), restores all other rights to their former state as before the war, in which doctrine I stand confirmed by the writers on the law of nations, the case of the gum trade will stand thus—By the treaty of 1783, Great Britain ceded to France, in full right, the river Senegal and its dependencies, with certain forts, on condition that the English shall have the liberty of carrying on a trade for gum, from the mouth of the river St. John to the bay and fort Portendic: for it is impossible not to consider a right reserved in a treaty that cedes the very subject which supplies that right, as a condition of the cession, and inseparably involved in the cession. We conquered the possessions thus ceded in the course of this war; by the treaty of peace now under discussion, we cede all the conquests of this war. We did not conquer that which we enjoyed by reservation from our former grant; we did not, therefore cede that which we had so reserved. This, however, is a matter of opinion; and both the conduct and the arguments of ministers leave it a matter of possible dispute. They therefore have made a peace with the reservation of a subject of quarrel in this instance. Indeed, it is a peace productive of no symptom or relation of friendship and amity; it has terminated the war, as if for the sole purpose of giving leisure to France to take possession of the cessions made to her: but, lest any friendly intercourse should appear intended on her part, she has carefully shut her ports to us. In the East Indies, my noble friend who spoke last has proved, by his private notes, that he had asserted, in the convention of 1787, our sovereignty; but the treaties of 1783, and 1787, containing no such word, seem to prove that it had been ineffectually as-

Digitized by Google

serted. And it appears, by both those treaties, that we had ceded the independent trade over all our possessions, which, by force of the term, cannot be dependent on any thing, not even on the treaty which stipulates that such grant shall be, and becomes only evidence of the independent right. The limitations respecting salt, in the convention of 1787, are merely conventional, and fall with the treaty. But should all this be disputed by noble lords, it becomes a proof that ministers have left unsettled, points which may, and are likely to be disputed. The motion made by the noble lord is therefore necessary to our situation, is the only possible corrective, or, at least, palliation to the mismanagement of ministers, who have pledged the country to the peace as it stands; for the king's prerogative to make peace and war is indisputable, but it is not in his power to make a bad peace a good one. It is equally the king's prerogative to appoint his counsellors and ministers, but he has not the power to give them experience and ability to manage the complicated affairs and interests of a great nation. Good intention and private virtues are not excuses for rashness in undertaking, and errors in the management of interests on which the peace, commerce, and future importance and prosperity of this country must depend.

The Earl of *Westmorland* defended the definitive treaty and said, there were very strong reasons why the commercial treaties with France and the other powers ought not to be renewed. When former treaties had been renewed, great doubts existed as to the propriety of doing so. But he would ask, would it be wise to refuse to treat with Holland and Spain through the medium of France? The treaty of 1787 had been made merely to correct the inadvertency of 1783. If it was said, that we gained nothing by the late war, he would desire noble lords to look at the different states of Europe, to see what they had lost, and how little we had lost in comparison. We had fortunately a great and able statesman at the head of our affairs; and if every other power engaged in the war had had such ministers, we should not now have to regret the desolation of the greater part of Europe. Much stress had been laid upon the appointment of Buonaparté to the presidency of the Italian republic; but he would ask, had France gained a single inch of territory in Italy by that act? Certainly not: her power there could not be increased. As to the Isle of Elba, where was the difference, whether it belonged to France, or to the king of Etruria? So far from the occupation of Louisiana by the French being dangerous to the American states, it would only serve to awaken their jealousy against a power which would never be able to attack them in that quarter with any success; and he trusted, that in any future contest between us and France, we should find these states to be most friendly and watchful allies. None of the things complained of had made such an alteration in the affairs of France as would justify ministers in breaking off the treaty and renewing the war. There was one reason predominating over every other, which made it necessary for ministers to conclude a peace—that was the general wish of the people; for though he would not have ministers be guided by speeches pronounced in Guildhall or Palace-yard, they were bound to regulate their conduct by the sentiments of the people at large. The noble earl then drew a comparison between the state of France and Great Britain: the former was distracted by parties, the existence of its present government depended on the life of one man, and the country was not in a condition to restore either its commerce or its navy. How different was the state of Great Britain, whose commerce and wealth gave her strength, and enabled her to call forth at any time all the energies of the people, who now enjoyed a state of unexampled tranquillity.

The earl of Darnley and lord Ellenborough rose together. A strong cry of lord Ellenborough! prevailed.

Lord *Ellenborough* began with declaring that he was sorry to delay, for a few minutes, the great share of entertainment and information which their lordships would, doubtless, derive from the speech of the noble earl, but that he was anxious to discharge his mind, by saying to their lordships what his duty compelled him to address to them. His lordship then made an apology for obtruding himself upon the House after so recently taking his seat in it, but what he had heard in the course of the debate rendered it impossible for him to resist what he held to be his indispensable duty. He would, therefore, though with great diffidence, submit his sentiments to their lordships; and first, he would take notice

Digitized by Google

of the extraordinary complaint urged by the noble lord who moved the address, that he had not been fairly dealt with, because, forsooth, ministers had not thought proper, prematurely, to open their defence of the definitive treaty in any of the preliminary debates that had taken place, in detail, on separate articles of it. Had that noble lord any right to complain, when he had himself been indulged, again and again, in discussing, at considerable length, those topics upon which he, and those noble lords who acted with him, chose to descant, although the noble lord had himself moved and named a day for taking the definitive treaty into consideration? After having, with great animation and severity, expressed his indignation at the noble lord's having dwelt on the complaint that his majesty's ministers had left him still at a loss to know in what manner they intended to answer the objections urged by him and other noble lords, respecting the various omissions in the treaty, lord Ellenborough proceeded to notice the adverse arguments advanced by the opposers of the treaty in the present debate. He emphatically begged leave, in the first place, to return his most grateful thanks, as an individual, to those ministers who had restored the blessings of peace to their country. The objections that he had heard against the definitive treaty, in his mind, weighed not a feather in comparison with the inestimable advantages of a cessation of hostilities under the present circumstances of the country. With regard to the noble lord's argument, that the public law of Europe was become a dead letter, because certain treaties were not renewed, he was astonished to hear men of talents lay any stress upon such a point of reasoning. To what use would the revival of all the solemn nonsense and important absurdity contained in those treaties have contributed? Were they not replete with articles totally inapplicable to the present situation of Europe; and were they not, for that reason, converted into useless trash and absolute waste paper? It was not in the immediate line of his professional studies to dedicate much time to treaties, but he had read over those in question with aching eyes, and was no stranger to the law of nations, which was founded on principles of immutable justice, was less liable to misconstruction and abstract reasoning, and more to be relied on than any single treaty, or collection of treaties; and he could assure the noble lord, that there were very few deviations in the writers on the law of nations upon the subject. Noble lords might, therefore, as well talk of the revival of the condition of mankind at some very remote period, and of the ancient treaties which had become, from the change of circumstances in Europe, obsolete and inapplicable. The noble mover was not always the strenuous advocate for the renewal of treaties; for it would be found, from the instructions to our negociator at Lisle, in the drawing up of which the noble lord must have had no inconsiderable share, that there was a particular injunction against the renewal of certain stipulations of the treaty of Utrecht. Our sovereignty in India, upon the violation of which, by the non-renewal of treaties, so much stress had been laid, he thanked God, depended upon surer and stronger ties than all the treaties that ever were made could give: it depended upon the right of conquest in a legitimate war, a war of defence; upon the public and repeated recognition of all the powers of Europe connected with commerce; and upon the established right of possession—the best right of all. Our sovereignty in India was now upwards of forty years in duration, and is older than any existing government in India. It could not be strengthened by all the treaties that could be devised; and the power that could meditate to dispute that title, must be so divested of all justice and moderation, that she would not be bound by any treaties that could be devised or entered into. His lordship took a rapid view of all the transitions of our acquirements of territory and dominion in India, naming the various powers through whose hands it had devolved to us, and thus making out his assertion, that our sovereignty of India was founded on the right of conquest in a legitimate war. In the course of this historical detail, his lordship said, our acceptance of the Dewannee was a foolish thing, although he did not, by any means, intend to detract from the merit or gallantry of lord Clive.—He next adverted to Malta, and insisted that the arrangement with respect to that island, was wise and prudent. He contended that the order was not in such a state of poverty as had been represented, and that it was not probable that it would fall into the hands of France. With regard to the Cape of Good Hope, the cession of which was so much deplored, he

Digitized by Google

ght we were well rid of it. The ex-
e of that post would have been so
t, that the country would very soon
had reason to complain of its reten-
We could not send a chaldron of
thither without an expense of 26*l.*
and it was well known, that at the
the Dutch were sending home, dur-
ur scarcity, a small and scanty supply
ain to this country, the government
was obliged to send ships to India,
t rice and other provisions, and an
nt request came home for a supply
iscuit, not for the troops only, but
for the Dutch themselves. It had
urged by the noble lord, that, de-
d of the Cape, our fleets must be
oyed in convoying our trade and our
s to India; but could it be forgotten,
in the war before the last we had
ce, Spain, and Holland against us,
a fleet more equal in power than
they now could boast of? A great
of clamour had been raised about the
navigation of the Indian seas: he
l ask, whether a single British ship
been stopped in those seas by the
h? And, with respect to the idle
paltry compliment of the Dutch
ng their flag to us, he thought there
ot much magnanimity in enforcing
rom the weaker power, which we did
equire from the stronger.—Of Por-
much had been said, but he believed
hat country was truly thankful for
we had done for it in the definitive
gement for peace. With regard to
ddress moved by the noble lord, it
nsidious. It did that by insinuation
it did not dare to avow in terms.
uld have been much more manly
lignified in that noble lord, if he
thought that ministers deserved to
fied and aspersed in the manner in
they had been that day, to have
l an explicit address to advise his
y to dismiss his present ministers
olly unworthy of his confidence.
ountry in general, he was persuaded,
ained very different sentiments of
conduct, and most especially in re-
to the peace which they had ob-
. The country had not forgotten
rcumstances of gloom and depres-
nder which they came into office,
consequence of which men of less
ined spirit than themselves might
hrunk from the acceptance of situa-
f responsibility. He was persuaded
ountry joined heartily with him,
when he gave ministers his most grateful thanks for that spirit and moderation, that wisdom and firmness, which had enabled them to rescue the British empire from the dangers and difficulties with which it was surrounded. His lordship declared he should vote for the amendment.

The Earl of *Darnley* said, he agreed with the learned lord, in thinking the present government deserving of approbation, for the spirited manner in which they had undertaken to manage the affairs of the country in a period of unexampled difficulty, as well as for the mixture of firmness and moderation which their conduct had displayed till the period of the signature of the preliminary articles of the peace, to which he had already given a silent vote of approbation. He must now, however, beg leave to state the grounds upon which that unqualified vote of approbation had been given to the preliminaries, as well as those upon which he felt it his duty to refuse it to the definitive treaty. His opinion of the preliminaries was, that, although they contained nothing splendid, nothing gratifying to national pride, or that afforded fit subject of exultation, they nevertheless contained nothing absolutely degrading; and though, perhaps, they had gone as far in concession as it was possible, short of humiliation, he did not think they had passed those bounds; and therefore, taking such a peace as the least of two evils, when compared with that of carrying on the war any longer without a reasonable hope of improving our situation, he had thought ministers perfectly justified in the part they had taken, and had supported them accordingly. — There were a few points which remained to be finally settled by the definitive treaty, and to these he could not help calling the particular attention of the House. He certainly had flattered himself that they were not points of complicated arrangement, but that they would have been easily, speedily, and satisfactorily settled. He took for granted, that the money due on account of prisoners would either have been put in a train of immediate payment, or some substantial pledge given to secure future payment; that the emperor of Russia was ready and willing to take Malta under his protection; and that the acknowledged defect in the preliminaries, in not specifically providing for the interests of the prince of Orange, would have been effectually remedied in the definitive treaty. A noble

Digitized by Google

lord had endeavoured to prove, that there was no essential difference between the two. He began with the article that regards Malta, justly considering it the most important: but he certainly had failed to prove that the definitive treaty had not placed that important island in a situation far more disadvantageous to this country, than it would have been if the spirit of the preliminaries had been followed up. It was generally admitted, that the most desirable arrangement would have been the cession of Malta in full sovereignty to Great Britain. That was supposed unattainable, and the next best, namely, the placing it completely out of the power and influence of France, by ensuring the protection of a third great and powerful nation, was promised by the preliminaries: whereas the definitive treaty leaves it open to the intrigues of France, and, in all probability, an easy prey to her power. In this essential article, therefore, we have lost much by the manifest difference between the treaty and the preliminaries.—The article respecting the prisoners of war had been arranged in a manner equally unsatisfactorily. The noble earl states, that the Ottoman Porte, the ally of Great Britain, was not admitted to the congress at Amiens, because the Porte had no cessions to make. If the noble earl had not immediately proceeded to speak of Portugal, he should have thought he had forgotten that Portugal was also the ally of Great Britain, and not only had cessions to make, but that she actually had made very material cessions. At so very late an hour, he would not enter into detail upon other parts of the subject; but he must enter his protest against the presumption, that the definitive treaty did not differ from the preliminary articles, because nothing could be more self-evident than that it did differ from them most essentially. Although he felt that the address moved by the noble lord contained a good deal that could not be controverted, yet as it also contained a strong implied censure upon ministers, to whom upon this and every other occasion he would give full credit for the best intentions, he should content himself with having thus briefly stated his sentiments.

The Earl of *Rosslyn* said, he rose chiefly to correct a mistake which his learned friend had fallen into. What he alluded to was, the honour due to the British flag from the Dutch in the narrow seas, and within a certain boundary of our coasts. It was not an idle and trifling ceremony, not a mere form, and therefore to be undervalued; but an important right, which implied our dominion of the sea. The maintenance of that right warmed the heart of every British seaman, and filled it with pride and exultation. He must feel great regret if the insisting on an honour, so flattering to the prejudices of our seamen, was to be forborne. Nor was our claim to this honour in the British and St. George's Channel, confined to the Dutch alone; it was due to us from all nations navigating those seas. At the same time, it was no claim of modern date. Our right of sovereignty at sea originated nearly three centuries since. In the reign of James the 1st the Dutch disputed it, and that eminent expounder of the law of nations, Grotius, wrote a learned book against it; but it was answered most satisfactorily by Mr. Shelden, whose book made such a powerful impression on men's minds, that the right was fully established. —With respect to the definitive treaty, he heartily regretted that more was not obtained than had been obtained; and, indeed, considering the attainment of two great and important objects, in the accomplishment of which the noble and illustrious hero opposite (lord Nelson) had so gloriously distinguished himself, we were entitled to have expected more advantageous terms. He alluded to the expeditions to Egypt and the Baltic. It was agreed, on all hands, that his majesty ought to be supported, in order to enable him to carry the treaty into complete execution. From certain words contained in the address moved by his noble friend, he lamented that, for the first time in his life, he should feel himself obliged to give his vote against him, and in favour of the amendment.

The *Lord Chancellor* entered into an elaborate argument in defence of the definitive treaty, declaring that as the House had, by a great majority, given their sanction to the preliminary articles, it was neither a usual nor a very candid proceeding, to discuss each article of the definitive treaty separately. The peace ought to be taken as a whole, and viewed collectively, upon a fair comparison of the relative situation of Great Britain, of France, and of Europe. He had heard many objections to the definitive treaty from his noble friend (for so he would still call him) which were certainly of some weight; but he had also heard many that

Digitized by Google

were so insignificant, that he was surprised at their coming from so respectable a quarter. He was not ready to say, that the present was a glorious peace, but he had discharged his duty conscientiously in advising his majesty to sign it; and he trusted, that, if candidly viewed, it would be found to be as good a peace, as was likely to be obtained, all the circumstances under which it was made taken into consideration. His noble friend had complained of variances in the definitive treaty from the preliminary articles, and of omissions of matters of considerable importance. The first, he believed, were only two in number:—the stipulations relative to the limits of French Guiana, and those relative to Malta. The omissions stated were of greater importance: they were the non-renewal of old treaties, the not having made a more specific stipulation to secure an adequate compensation to the prince of Orange for his losses, the not providing for keeping the Cape and Cochin, and the want of stipulation for the right of cutting logwood in the bay of Honduras, and of bringing the gum from Senegal and the coast of Africa. He would consider the omissions first. And here he must differ a little from his learned friend in respect to the importance of treaties solemnly executed between nation and nation. He had, during twenty years of his professional life, witnessed the growth and improvement of the distinguished talents of his learned brother, with whom he had lived in habits of uninterrupted friendship: he could not, however, agree with him in thinking, that treaties deserved to be treated in the light manner he had treated them. He would, however, assert, with his learned friend, that most of the conditions of the treaties, the omission of the revival of which were complained of by the noble mover, were from the violent change that the circumstances of Europe, and more especially of France, had undergone within the last twenty years, wholly inapplicable to the present treaty; and at the same time, all the great and important rights, which his noble friend thought lost and abandoned, because they were not recognized in the definitive treaty, stood secured on a much stronger basis than any recognition of them by any treaty whatsoever. With regard to the sovereignty of India, he agreed completely with the whole of the argument contained in a speech adverted to by his noble friend. Let his noble friend recollect, that the argument in question was that of a lawyer and a statesman (Mr. Dundas); better qualified, perhaps, from the public situation he had filled for the last ten years, to judge with accuracy of every right and interest connected with our possessions in India, than any other man in existence. His noble friend (lord Auckland) had already, he flattered himself, convinced the House, that our right of sovereignty of India stood recognized and secured beyond the reach of future doubt. —With regard to the compensation to the prince of Orange, it certainly was said, in the debate on the preliminary articles, that a full security for an adequate compensation to that unfortunate prince for his losses would be obtained, and if there was any reliance to be placed on the faith of nations, solemnly pledged, an adequate compensation would be secured, agreeably to the 18th article of the definitive treaty. A noble earl (Carlisle) had, in a previous debate, laid great stress on the negotiation of a guarantee, stated to have been privately executed on the day when the plenipotentiaries of the four contracting powers had signed the definitive treaty, between the ambassador of Holland and the plenipotentiary of France, to secure the former power from being liable to claim on them for any compensation to be made good to them. But no convention of that sort, privately and separately executed between two of the contracting parties, could absolve either France or Holland from their solemn obligation to Spain and Great Britain, under a definitive treaty signed and executed by four contracting parties.—Much argument had been urged respecting the importance of the Cape, but did his noble friend who commenced the debate recollect the immense charge the holding it in our hands, for so short a time, had been to the country? Neither, if he had been rightly informed, was it of any material importance to the East India company, as a port for their ships to touch at in their passage to and from India. When it was so long possessed by the Dutch, every desirable advantage was easily obtained from it; and so, he doubted not, the case would be again.—As to all the noble lord's reasoning upon the idea of France, Holland, and Spain having a right, under the article in the definitive treaty, to have a more formidable united fleet than us at the Cape, in the propor-

Digitized by Google

tion of three to one, it was altogether visionary. Had it ever been the case in former wars between this country and those powers, or was it at all likely that it should ever be the case in the course of hostilities that might be commenced in future? He assured the House, that no danger was to be dreaded on account of the Cape being delivered over to that power, in the hands of which it had remained for so many years, without injury to this country or its interests. As little danger of our losing the right to cut logwood in the bay of Honduras was to be apprehended, as there was of danger from the Dutch being allowed to resume the possession of the Cape. Let it be held in mind, that Honduras became the rightful property of Great Britain by conquest, and was never ceded to Spain, without an acknowledgment, on the part of the court of Madrid, of our undoubted right to cut logwood. In proportion as the right of conquest was paramount to the effect of treaties, in which that right was not specifically abandoned and resigned, our right to cut logwood in the bay of Honduras remained more secure and free from challenge, than it could have done, if it had been mentioned in the definitive treaty. With regard to the gum trade from Senegal and the coast of Africa, he saw no ground for imagining that it was at an end, from what was stated to be a culpable omission in the treaty under consideration. It had been carried on by us uninterruptedly during the war, and he had no doubt it would continue to be exercised by us without molestation.—As to the right of the flag, he could not regard it as a matter of so trivial a nature, as his learned friend had seemed to consider it. It was a right of great national importance, as his learned friend who had spoken last had truly stated. But in order to account for its not having been insisted on in the definitive treaty their lordships ought to carry their minds back to historical facts, and to compare them with the present treaty. Holland had long submitted to the right claimed and exercised by this country of the honour due to the British flag. France and Spain had pertinaciously refused to acknowledge it. Could his majesty's negotiator, therefore, in the discharge of his duty as a plenipotentiary, vested with powers to negotiate a treaty between four contracting powers, expect to be able to persuade the other plenipotentiaries to admit a stipulation of the recognition of a right, of which two of the contracting powers had never acknowledged, though the other had done so ever since the year 1515? In no treaty with France or Spain was the recognition of this right to be found, and it must remain as it had hitherto done on the power of practically enforcing it. His lordship next came to speak of the stated variances between the definitive treaty and the preliminary articles, the first of which was, the supposed departure from the sixth article of the latter, which stipulates, "That the territories and possessions of her most faithful majesty shall be preserved entire." He reminded the House, that under the words of that article of the preliminary treaty, this country could not possibly be understood to undertake for more, than to obtain a restitution of any territory obtained from Portugal by force of arms. The settlements of the limits of Guiana between the French and Portuguese was an arrangement adjusted by the treaty of Badajos, to which this country was no party, nor could it possibly exercise any influence over it. But he did not, on a geographical examination of the limits specified in the 7th article of the definitive treaty, find the smallest reason to entertain the apprehensions which the noble mover had declared to have forcibly impressed his mind. With respect to her most faithful majesty having ceded a part of her domestic territory to Spain, that was in like manner the result of an arrangement adjusted between the courts of Lisbon and Madrid, but of a very unimportant nature; it being universally declared, that the ceded territory was unproductive and of little value, beyond the reach of the defence or protection of the Portuguese government, and had been, insignificant as it was, the subject of long and repeated disputes between the two crowns.—The disposal of Malta had been another theme for the display of his noble friend's eloquence, and he had argued upon it under the idea, that Malta must soon fall into the hands of the French republic; but a view of the tenth article of the definitive treaty would convince every impartial man, that there was not the smallest probability of such a result. The French and English langues were put an end to, and a Maltese langue was directed to be established, the forces of his Britannic majesty were to evacuate the island and its dependencies in

Digitized by Google

three months after the ratification, or sooner, if it can be done, and the island was to be delivered to the grand master, or commissioners properly empowered to receive possession. The garrison was to be half Maltese, and the supreme command as well as the appointment of the officers, was to be vested in the grand master, upon certain conditions, and the ports were to be open to all nations. Could any man hear these facts, and not be convinced that abundant care had been taken to guard against the influence and dominion of the French. Supposing for a moment, what was almost incredible, that his Sicilian majesty should, through the predominating influence or power of France, be induced to betray his trust, did any man believe, that if this country saw France preparing to send a force against Malta, she would not instantly dispatch a superior force to protect the island; and, with the assistance of the Maltese, allowed on all hands to entertain a strong predilection for this country, could much doubt be entertained of our success in counteracting the efforts of France?—With regard to the restoration of Egypt to the Porte, that important event had been effected even prior to the cessation of hostilities, through the distinguished valour and brilliant success of the noble admiral he saw near him (lord Nelson), and the bravery and skill manifested by the commander, officers, and soldiers of his majesty's forces, who had subsequently landed and subdued the army of the French republic, checked their progress, and finally compelled them to evacuate the country. It was to be remembered, that one reason why our forces could not more essentially conduce to the protection of Portugal was, that they were necessarily withdrawn for the purpose of achieving an object in Egypt of infinitely higher importance, as the safety of our Indian possessions depended on it.—His lordship spoke of the late ministers in terms of great respect, acknowledging that their spirited exertions had not only led to our successes in Egypt, but at Copenhagen, where the same gallant hero to whom he had just alluded, had equally distinguished himself, and secured the admiration and gratitude of his country. He adverted to the argument that had been advanced respecting the Russians made prisoners by France, while they served as auxiliaries to the British army, and treated the conclusion of the noble lord who moved the address, that we were liable, under the treaty, to be called on to pay for furnishing them with clothes, arms, and ammunition, which they were to direct against us, as scarcely worth a serious argument.—After having examined every objection that had been urged against the different articles of the definitive treaty, his lordship came to the consideration of the address itself. His learned friend (lord Ellenborough) had said, that it would have been more manly and more dignified in the noble mover, if he really thought that his majesty's ministers had made the bad peace he had described it to be, to have come forward with an unqualified address to his majesty, advising him to dismiss his servants as wholly unworthy of his confidence. His reason for objecting to the address moved by his noble friend was, that in substance and effect, though not in terms, it amounted to the very address that his learned friend described; it was, in fact, an address of censure and removal; and as to that part of it, which recommended instant negotiation and remonstrance upon important points, stated to have been neglected in negotiating the present treaty, he agreed with the noble duke who moved the first amendment, that to open a new negotiation upon such grounds, after a definitive treaty had been concluded in all its forms, would be to negociate with a drawn sword in our hands, and would inevitably lead to a renewal of the war.

Earl *Camden* said, that in many of the arguments that had been urged by the noble mover, he entirely coincided. He was neither satisfied with the preliminary articles nor with the definitive treaty; he thought the cessions made on our part were many and valuable, and that nothing equal to a fair balance had been ceded to, or retained by us; there was not, therefore, a reciprocity visible on the face of the treaties. Nevertheless, as the country anxiously panted for peace, and their hopes and prospects of soon obtaining it had been raised and encouraged by the preliminary treaty, perhaps what had taken place in the interim, unwarrantable as the transactions on the part of France had been, would not have justified a rupture of the negotiation; and, therefore, it might be right to advise his majesty to order the definitive treaty to be signed. As the noble secretary of state's amendment contained the best and most essential parts of his noble friend's address, and

Digitized by Google

particularly that very important advice to his majesty, to declare that he would concur in no farther encroachment or aggrandizement on the part of the French republic, he should vote for it.

The Duke of *Richmond* said, he had listened with great attention to the masterly arguments of the noble mover, and he owned he felt conviction upon many of the points which the noble lord reasoned upon. At the same time, he was not one of those who approved of the conduct of the war. He thought it had not been wisely or economically conducted. In particular, he must complain of the lavish manner in which the public money had been squandered in running after every petty German prince to beg that he would take some of our cash; not that he was an enemy to subsidies when properly applied, and due care was taken that we should receive the advantages proposed in granting each subsidy. He wished there could have been unanimity on so important a question. But, exclusive of the several omissions in the definitive treaty, he could not but think that nothing short of the strongest necessity could have justified the making of such a disadvantageous peace. Was it for the honour of the country to offer peace to the enemy, and to submit to the most humiliating terms during the expectation of a threatened invasion? Did it indicate the high spirit of a brave nation, which had carried on the war single handed, with the greatest success, in all quarters of the globe? Were we not prepared at all points to repel the invaders, if they had dared to carry their menaces into execution? Had we not insulted their coasts and braved them in their ports, after having broken the northern confederacy by the intrepid conduct of the hero who sat on the bench below him? He disapproved of a change of system under such circumstances. He must therefore consider that the negotiations had been pressed to a conclusion in an inauspicious hour. He did not doubt that the present ministers meant well; and they should have his support to every prudent and efficient measure that they should bring forward; but he must stop short on the present occasion, as he could not vote for the amendment.

Lord *Hobart* said, he trusted the situation in which he stood, as one of the ministers whose character was materially involved in the opinion the House might form upon the question before them, would be his excuse for venturing to hope for the indulgence of their lordships at so late an hour. He had listened to the noble duke with that attention that was due to a person of his respectable talents and parliamentary experience; and, however strongly he might feel the advantage of obtaining his grace's concurrence on the present occasion, more especially if it should be accompanied by an unanimous vote, he could not think that the government ought to forego their just pretension to call upon the House for an approbation of their conduct in having concluded a definitive treaty upon the basis of the preliminary articles, even at the hazard of that unanimity which would otherwise be so extremely desirable. The noble duke, indeed, who had not voted upon the preliminaries, might consider himself perfectly at liberty with respect to the definitive treaty; but he was at a loss to understand, upon what ground any noble lord who had supported the preliminaries could withhold his assent from the treaty then under consideration. The noble duke had disapproved of the peace on account of the time at which it was negociated. He had disapproved of negotiation when invasion was threatened. He disliked a change of system under such circumstances. Lord Hobart denied that any change of system had taken place in that respect, since the present administration had come into office. The noble lord opposite (Grenville) some time before he relinquished his official situation, had repeatedly assured the House, that the question of peace was reduced to a question of terms. The present administration, immediately after their accession to office, had expressly declared, upon being pressed for a communication of their sentiments respecting peace, that they would make no professions upon that subject, and only desired to be judged by their actions. It, however, was now evident, that they had lost no time in opening a negotiation. That negotiation had indeed been protracted from various circumstances: but principally from the situation of affairs in Egypt. The French, in the expectation of a successful issue to the contest in which they were engaged, in that country, were not disposed to conclude a treaty founded upon the presumption of their failure in that enterprise; his majesty's ministers would agree to no terms which admitted the possibility of a contrary result, and thus the negociation

Digitized by Google

was protracted, until the persevering valour of the British troops had nearly effected the expulsion of the French from Egypt. With respect to a threatened invasion, there might have been a time when the reinforcements which it was judged necessary to send in support of our gallant countrymen in Egypt, might, to a certain degree, have created an idea that we had weakened ourselves at home. But, long before the negociation was brought to a conclusion, our preparations were such as to leave no apprehension upon any man's mind for the consequences of any attack which the French might have ventured to undertake. Upon the ground, therefore, of threatened invasion, the objection of the noble duke could not apply. In other respects, the time of concluding the treaty was peculiarly well chosen. No doubt was then entertained of the prevailing sentiments of the people in favour of peace. Delay would inevitably have produced petitions upon the subject from every part of the country; and it could hardly be necessary for him to point out to the House the disadvantages which must have attended a negotiation commenced under such circumstances; disadvantages, indeed, of such a nature, as could leave no hope of the treaty so undertaken being concluded upon terms, to which a government, that really valued the honour and interest of the empire, could possibly accede; delay therefore could only have rendered peace unattainable, and have led to dishonourable conditions.—He could not refrain from making some few remarks upon certain topics which had been urged by the noble mover in the course of his speech; and, first, with respect to the Cape. He had formed a decided opinion upon that subject, in some degree from his own observations; but principally from communications with a variety of persons connected with India; and he could add the high and respectable authority of the noble lord at the head of the Admiralty, who from indisposition had been obliged to leave the House, and he could explicitly declare, that he had scarcely ever met with one person who did not consider the Cape a burthen rather than an advantage to this country.—Lord Hobart here took occasion to advert to the opinion of Mr. Dundas, which had been publicly pronounced in favour of the Cape. He next went into a detail of his reasons for the opinion he had offered to the House respecting the Cape; that the expense of it had been enormous, that its revenue did not pay its civil establishment; that it was a peculiarly expensive station for ships; that for the six months they could be in Table Bay, it was not a perfectly safe one; and that for the other six months, when they were forced to go into Table Bay, it was extremely inconvenient as a port of refreshment; that no firewood could be procured except at an enormous price; that as a situation from whence the enemy might interrupt our trade to and from India, little apprehension need be entertained. Ships on their voyage to Europe from China and India, at the proper seasons, are able to take so wide a range on going round the Cape, as to be out of danger from enemy's cruizers from that station. As to its being a port of refreshment, our India ships (such was the improved skill of our navigators) touched no where on their passage to India, and on their return St. Helena answered every purpose. Ships of war on their way out might, indeed, have occasion to go to some port for water and refreshments; but had they not the island of Madeira, the Cape de Verd Islands, and Madagascar? Upon the subject of Rio Janeiro, he should have occasion, in the course of what he had to state to their lordships respecting the Arawari, to notice a notable discovery that had been made by the noble mover. That noble lord had again dwelt upon the advantages we should have derived from the possession of Cochin, which he had told us we might have; that it was well known that the Dutch set scarcely any value upon it;—information to which he was inclined to give implicit credit. Cochin, previous to the destruction of Tippoo and his empire, in a political point of view, was undoubtedly of great importance, either as it afforded us the means of entering the valuable districts which he possessed upon the Malabar coast, or as it would have given to any European power who was master of it, a facility of communication and of affording military assistance to that prince. But by the late glorious successes of the British arms against Tippoo, the whole of the districts in question have been placed under the Company's government, and Cochin is thus reduced to a position so circumscribed by those districts on the one side, and by the rajah of Travancore on the other, that a garrison stationed there could not subsist but

Digitized by Google

by the indulgence of the British officers. Under these circumstances, the exchange of Negapatam for Cochin, even if it were not an unhealthy situation, was no longer a desirable object for this country.—It was impossible for him to pass unnoticed that part of the noble mover's speech which related to the river Arawari. It had been represented as a naval station, from whence the commerce carried on by the Portuguese in the river Amazon, might be completely destroyed; and this statement, he conceived, had been founded upon a chart that had been reduced and annexed to a periodical newspaper. Having minutely examined the subject, he should take the liberty of stating, that the great depôt of the Portuguese trade in that part of the world was not, as appears to have been generally supposed, within the Amazon river; that it was at the city of Para, situated in the province of Maragnon, near the river Tocantine, that discharges itself into the sea at Cape Meguari, which forms one extremity of the gulf, that may be called the mouth of the Amazon river, but which cannot be less than 150 miles south east of the Arawari: that the Tocantine receives the waters of various other considerable rivers, by which the produce of the neighbouring countries is brought to Para; and that the productions of the countries bordering on the Amazon, as well as those conveyed down the several streams which lose themselves in that great river, make their way to Para, along the Tagipura, which communicates with the great river on which the city of Para is situated. In order to place this subject in its true point of view before the House, he hoped he might be allowed to communicate some of the information he had collected concerning it, principally for the purpose of showing that the mouth of the Arawari was ill-calculated for a naval station, and that it was not so situated as to obstruct the communication of the Portuguese traders with the Amazon river. The celebrated academician, M. de la Condamine, who visited Para in 1748, states, that by means of the direct commerce between Para and Lisbon, European articles are received at the former place in exchange for the commodities of the country, which, besides those brought from the interior of Brazil, consist of various useful productions from the rivers that lose themselves in the Amazon, as well as from the territories bordering on that stream. These articles are conveyed to Para by the channels which Condamine himself navigated; that is to say, either by the Tapiguru river, which insulates the island Marago, or along the northern shore of that island. The count de Pagan, who drew up an account of the Amazon river and country, for the purpose of inducing cardinal Mazarine to undertake the conquest of it, particularly points out the track to be pursued in entering the Amazon river from the ocean, to be along the coasts of Brazil, of the province of Macagnan, and of the island Magajo, to the south of the line: and the general course thus described (allowances being made for an imperfect projection of the coast) has the assent of that distinguished geographer M. de la Rochette. The channel of the Amazon from the North Cape, laid down in the Dutch coasting pilot of Guiana, however useful it may be for vessels entering the river from the northward, cannot, without error, be considered as describing the course requisite to be considered by the traders between Portugal and the provinces on the Amazon. It appears manifestly designed to delineate the tract of the country trade. "From the Arawari river," says the author of the Description Geographique de la Guianne, "the coast runs twenty leagues to the south-west, during which course islands of different magnitudes form a canal or passage, along which the barks and small craft of the country pass in going from Macapa to the North Cape." But even in this point of view, the mouth of the Arawari, that limits the French and Portuguese Guiana, could not afford to ships of force a station from whence they might obstruct the navigation, because the coast is then subject to the continual recurrence of a periodical and formidable phenomenon, called by the natives the Pororoco; and which is thus described by De la Condamine: "Between Macapa and the North Cape, where the great head of the river is chiefly narrowed by the islands, especially opposite the great mouth of the Arawari, the tides offer a singular phenomenon: during the three days nearest to the full and new moons (the periods of the high tides) the sea, instead of taking six hours to rise, attains its highest elevation in the space of one or two minutes. It may be supposed this effect does not take place quietly: a frightful noise, from the dis-

Digitized by Google

tance of one or two leagues, announces the Pororoco, so called by the Indians of the district. As it approaches, the noise increases, and presently a promontory of water from twelve to fifteen feet in height, appears followed closely by a second, a third, and sometimes a fourth, which occupies the whole breadth of the canal, destroying and carrying before it every thing opposed to it. I have in some places seen a large tract of ground carried away by the Pororoco, large trees forced up by the roots, and every species of devastation. Wherever it passes, the shore is as smooth as if it had been carefully swept. Canoes, boats, and even ships, can only avoid it by anchoring where there are deep soundings. The fear entertained by the chief of my Indians of not being able, in the five remaining days in the spring tides, to reach the Cape, from which we were distant only fifteen leagues, made them determine to wait nine days upon a desert island, until the full moon should be entirely past."—Before he quitted this part of the subject, he must advert to that extraordinary discovery which the noble mover had made, of the danger that would arise to our ships bound to Rio Janeiro, in their way to India, from the extension of French Guiana, to the river Arawari. He would not comment upon the noble lord's apprehensions in that respect; he would simply state, that the Arawari was situated about 2 degrees north of the line, and Rio Janeiro in latitude 23 degrees south, being a distance of 25 degrees. There were other points upon which he should have wished to have stated his sentiments, but with which at that hour he would not trouble the House.

Lord *Grenville* said, he did not at that late hour [Seven in the morning] rise to reply, though he should have been extremely glad to have done so. He would only say one word in explanation of a gross misrepresentation of the noble secretary. He had not mentioned Rio Janeiro, because he well knew where it lay; but had said that the French possession of the part of Guiana bounded by the river Arawari, would, during a war, enable them to oblige the Portuguese to shut British ships out from the Brazils, where it was sometimes useful for our ships for India to call, water, and obtain provisions; and then we could put in no where nearer than Madagascar, where we should find but poor accommodation.

The question being put on the amendment, the House divided: Contents, 100; Proxies, 22—122; Not Contents, 16; Majority, 106. Lord Pelham's motion, which was the same as that moved in the House of Commons by lord Hawkesbury, was then put and carried.

List of the Minority.

Duke of Richmond	Earls Mansfield
Marq. of Buckingham	Warwick
Earls Spencer	Carnarvon
Carysfort	Lords Minto
Carlisle.	Darlington
Fitzwilliam	Grenville
Radnor	Cawdor, &
Fortescue	Kenyon

Lord *Holland* said, that at that hour he should move the resolution he held in his hand with no other preface than this, that their lordships had sanctioned the treaty of peace with France; that nothing but necessity could justify such a treaty; but that that necessity had, be believed, existed; and it became the character of their lordships to record on their Journals the circumstances which had induced them to acquiesce in such extensive sacrifices. For this purpose he moved—"That the omission of various opportunities of negotiating a peace with advantage to this country, and more particularly the rejection of the overtures made by the chief consul in January 1800, appears to this House to have led to a state of affairs which rendered peace so necessary to the preservation and safety of the empire, as to justify the important and painful sacrifices which his majesty had been advised to make for the attainment thereof."

The Duke of *Montrose* said, that when first the noble lord had given notice of a motion to censure the late administration, he, conceiving that the censure intended to be moved was of a more general nature, had announced his attention of converting by an amendment the motion of censure into a motion of approbation. As it was, he should confine himself to this observation, that the rejection of Buonaparté's overtures was to be judged by the circumstances which then existed, and not by any subsequent events. When Buonaparté sent his letter to his majesty, it was to solicit the negotiation of a separate peace with Great Britain; he wrote also at the same time to Vienna and to Petersburgh, to solicit Austria and Russia to make a distinct peace each of them with the French republic. This was ob-

Digitized by Google

viously an insidious design to divide and separate the allies.

The question was negatived.

Debate in the Commons on the Definitive Treaty of Peace.] May 13. The order of the day for taking into consideration the Definitive Treaty of Peace being read,

Mr. *Windham* rose and said;—Upon a subject which has already received a good deal of discussion in several important points of detail, I hope I shall not be under the necessity of troubling the House with any argument of great length. If, however, I am relieved from such necessity, I owe it to that mode of proceeding to which some have objected as irregular. The best proof of the propriety of the conduct of those who brought various points of the definitive treaty separately before the House, will be, the manner of our now coming to the general examination. Who can deny that every man who has attended those discussions must find himself better prepared, better informed, more competent to form a fair and accurate judgment on the whole subject, from the separate explanations, and the additional lights which have been derived from the preliminary debates? By having investigated the points in detail, we are qualified to pronounce a decision on the whole case. Much ground has been cleared, many questions have been answered, many difficulties have been elucidated, which must otherwise have perplexed the consideration of a subject, in itself so full of matter, and so little susceptible of being reduced into a short compass. Assisted by those previous inquiries, we are enabled the better to shape the argument to such parts of so complicated a subject as are the most deserving of consideration.

I therefore proceed to take a view of the leading points of the Definitive Treaty. The order is indifferent, and I begin with Malta. After the discussions that we have already had regarding the situation in which our interests in that island are left by the treaty, it is unnecessary to enlarge upon the advantages which the French have gained by the stipulation of neutrality. It is clear that, including the force of their allies, Spain and Holland, they may have eighteen ships of the line in its neutral port, while we have no more than six. But these points of detail are of inferior importance. The whole disposition of the island of Malta renders the stipulation of neutrality fictitious. The garrison must in fact be French. It is in vain to talk of the mummery that there shall not be this langue or the other langue. The whole is French. If any man denies this to be the case, I shall be very happy to see his opinions and his reasons recorded, that they may be compared with the future result. So far from having restored the order of Malta, we have by the arrangements of this treaty made war upon it in the very spirit of French principles. This little order, which contained in itself the great characteristics and distinctive qualities of that which the French revolution served to destroy, we have now concurred to overthrow. The little phial which contained the essence of the old principles, ministers have diluted, and not even with common water, but with water from the puddle. In this degradation, how can its ancient spirit be kept up? Nay, it is already understood, that the German knights refuse to serve in a body so degraded and fallen off from its original and peculiar character. Who does not see that Neapolitan soldiers can never form any security for the independence of the island? The thing is ridiculous. The argument may be put into the shape of a syllogism. If France controls, Naples puts in the garrison, and the garrison holds the island of Malta; what is the conclusion? In truth the state of Malta is a virtual and total surrender, with a ridicule in the manner infinitely disgraceful to the reputation of our national counsels. Far better would it have been to have made an absolute cession of it, and thus have acquired a claim to compensation and equivalent, than to have formed a vain and futile pretence to establish its neutrality and independence. At present our footing and interest in the Mediterranean, which used to be reckoned of so much importance, are utterly abandoned. In this and in various other points there is a marked variation between the preliminaries and the definitive treaty, to the disadvantage of this country.—The Cape of Good Hope is given up in full sovereignty to the Dutch; so that the latter may, whenever they please, surrender it to the French. The question of its being made a free port is left entirely at the option of France; and in such an alternative we can only expect that it will be made a free port, if that mode of keeping it were to be less favourable to Eng-

Digitized by Google

land than any other. But it is said, that the Cape is but a tavern. Be it so. Is not a tavern in the middle of so long a voyage a very important accommodation? Nay, without it how can troops be sent out for the protection of your Eastern empire? Without the refreshment of that tavern, troops must be sent to India in such a state as to endanger their health, and to land them probably unfit for service for six weeks, perhaps too on an emergency when their immediate service would be required. The only other place of stopping at is the Brazils, and how can we calculate that in time of war we should continue that facility? Our Indian empire then being our sheet anchor, every thing accessory to its preservation and defence is of the utmost importance. While we lose any advantages from the Cape, see what France gains! what she gains likewise by the restitution of Cochin to the Dutch, and the additional means of annoying our possessions which her coalition with the Dutch must afford!—With respect to the boundaries of French and Portugueze Guiana, it appears to me, that even with the benefit of all the previous consideration, this subject, which could not before have been understood at all, is now very imperfectly understood. Ministers seem to have been puzzled with the Catapanatuba, the Arawari, &c. The Arawari is at last agreed to be the limit; but in fact there is little difference between the treaty of Madrid and that of Badajos as to the boundary. The object of the French is gained by the latter as well as the former. They obtained the complete command of the navigation of the river of Amazons. But why, instead of describing the boundary in the preliminary articles, was it not expressly said it should be the Arawari? That the boundary of the Arawari still leaves the Portugueze settlement exposed to the designs of France, is what I contend. It is a point, indeed, which is to be ascertained by maps; and on their authority I rest the assertion, that the Portugueze have not acquired that security which it was their object to procure.—When I look also at the cession of Louisiana to France, a point acquiesced in by the definitive treaty, it is of a magnitude that I am at a loss to describe in adequate terms. Taking the indefinite extent of Guiana, and the cession of Louisiana, we may be said to have given away a fourth part of the globe. We have given the command of the two greatest rivers in the world—the Mississippi in the North of America, and the river of Amazons in the South. Rivers are the vital parts of countries; we may be said, therefore, without hyperbole, to have given away a brace of continents. Never was there such a lavish, prodigal, thoughtless spirit of cession! Ministers have really scattered pearls like barley-corns: and I am amazed to see with what indifference the country has viewed transactions of such importance, by which so many of the most valuable interests have been lavished upon their rivals, and in which so many stipulations pregnant with danger and pain to themselves, are contained.

In addition to their consideration with regard to foreign objects, the whole continent of Europe is abandoned to France. I should think, indeed, that instead of our being called upon to allow the danger of such a state of things, those who have acquiesced in so monstrous an innovation, are bound to show that it is consistent with the public safety. While they are letting in tides which are spreading so furiously in every direction, it is their business to show us what they will not inundate, what they will spare. We follow this torrent, threatening our rights, in many different tracts. We see it endangering us at Honduras, we see it menacing to shake and unsettle in India the dearest part of our foreign empire. But this matter will require a more particular discussion, and I am glad that it has already been the subject of debate. That the definitive treaty has not settled our rights in such a manner as to preclude all doubts, I perceive from the fact admitted last night by my right hon. friend (Mr. Dundas), a person so fully conversant in the affairs of India, that in the first instance he was alarmed lest, by the non-renewal of treaties, particularly the convention of 1787, some danger to our Indian dominions might arise. That any uncertainty was ever felt by him, is at least a proof of the fact that uncertainty may exist. We contended, that by the abrogation of the convention of 1787, founded upon and referring to the treaties of 1783 and 1763, something was taken away, which had formerly quieted the claims of France, and secured the rights of this country. But it was said, that it was better to get rid both of the disease and of the remedy; and, doubtless, it is possible that a constitution may be im-

Digitized by Google

proved by such an operation. This argument was at least to the point, whether it was conclusive or not. With regard to the arguments to prove the clearness of our Indian rights, they seemed rather less to the point. We were told in lofty and magnificent phrases of the justice of our cause. But who had said that our cause was not good, that our rights were not clear? We have to contend with an adversary who may not choose to appeal to the House of Commons. The argument was all thrown away, for it was *coram non judice*. The question is, what will the enemy say, and how should you have acted to meet his objections? If disputes were to be settled by a man and his own attorney, the business of Westminster-hall would not be a little diminished; but, unfortunately, when the matter is very amicably settled, the adversary comes and drags the suitor into court. So, to discuss the justice of the cause here, when nobody disputes it, seems to be a waste of very excellent argument. The right hon. gentleman, like Ajax, rushes tremendous forth, felling down us poor cattle, instead of reserving his might for the foes who may resist him. We all know, that previous not only to the convention of 1787, but to 1783, claims respecting Indian trade and territory had been set up by the French. What reason have we to think that the present government of France will drop any pretensions hostile to this country which former governments had advanced? In 1783, as I am afraid will appear to have been the case in 1802, points were left unsettled, and new explanations became necessary. The convention of 1787 was more favourable to us, because concluded in a moment when England could negociate with greater effect, and it gave us the most satisfactory security. The French abandoned the means of enforcing any claims of a kind that could have proved injurious to us. But why were not means taken to prevent the possibility of claims by which our empire in the East may be disturbed? What has been doing for the last seven months? Our rights, whether of conquest or treaty (as so ably distinguished and demonstrated last night), are unquestionable; but is there not reason to apprehend a renewal of former cavils? From some parts of the speech of my right hon. friend (Mr. Dundas), I should have been led to think that he had been napping, and on his awaking had imagined that we were still at open war. He talked of drawing the sword against any power that should dispute our rights, and exultingly dwelt upon our strength in India. It is very true, our strength in India may defy all attack; but does he not know that, though the dispute is in India, the battle may be fought in Europe? Like an action at law, the right may lie in Cumberland, and the issue be tried in Westminster-hall. The French may think us strong in India, and weak in Europe. We have seen already how, by a close squeeze in Europe, they have made us vomit up what we had gorged elsewhere.

With regard to the sincerity and faith of France, let us only look to other countries. The archduke was driven out of Tuscany; but Austria and the neighbouring powers thought that at least the territory was to remain as before. It was, however, disposed of in compliment to Spain, and the prince of Parma placed upon a new-raised throne. France, at the same time, had its eyes on the Isle of Elba, but was not so uncourteous as at once peremptorily to demand this garnish of the king of Etruria on his entering into the new spunging-house. It took away Piombino from the king of Naples, and generously gave it to the Etrurian prince, in exchange for the important fortress of Porto Ferrajo. These are some of the materials from which we are to arrange our proceedings. When we cast our eyes upon the map of Europe, and survey the growth of France, the prospect is so immense, as not to admit of a summary. The subject requires that we should look into the history of the revolution and of the war, and consider what France has done, what she can do, and what no doubt she will do, compared with what Great Britain also can and will effect. As an instance of what France can do, now that it is distinctly a body of new Romans meditating the conquest of the world, let us recollect that France has effected in ten years, what Polybius, the historian, boasted Rome had accomplished in fifty-three years, or about half a century. Their achievements resembled what was related in the popular ballad of Hosier's Ghost, when it says to admiral Vernon—

"What I wish'd twenty ships t'have done,
"You have achiev'd with six alone."

The French have taken the Romans for their model, and affect to imitate them in

Digitized by Google

every thing. Independent of their territories, the map of Europe is but small, and only two great powers are left standing. Russia is powerful, but at a great distance from them; Austria alone remains strong, and perhaps not impaired, in territories; but the loss of all those strong-holds and fortresses, in the late war, which constituted her stays, has made her such a wreck, that, in the next storm, the mast of that vessel must inevitably go by the board. In fact, there is no single continental power which can again dare to face France, without being instantly crushed by that enormous mace with which she is now armed. The French avow that they act upon the Roman model; they fairly acknowledge what they mean to be, and frankly tell us also what they mean us to be.—Some, indeed, admit that Europe is gone, and they say peace be with it! they think that, come what will, we may take to our boat and escape. That might have been said formerly; but the spectre of French power now pursues us in every direction. In Europe, in Asia, in America, it follows, continually scaring us with its threatening aspect. Look at the West Indies, and see France in possession, by cession, of Martinique, Guadaloupe, and St. Domingo, since the preliminaries, by the permission of ministers. It is pretended, indeed, that the recovery of that island from the Blacks was necessary to the security of our own colonies. Such is the opinion of those who are interested in the West India islands; but is that authority conclusive? Allowing the fidelity and patriotism of these men to be unimpeached, (as they certainly are), is it not possible that regard for their property may induce them to form an opinion of the policy of our facilitating the recovery of St. Domingo, that may be inconsistent with the interest of the nation? For my part, I conceive that the power of the blacks, confined to St. Domingo, and without the means of extending beyond it, was much less formidable to this country than the establishment of the power of France. Even though the emissaries or the example of the blacks might have reached the other islands, still, though private property might have been endangered, the political interest of the state was less endangered. The West India proprietors might think, that, if the negroes obtained the ascendancy, their property would be ruined, while, if the islands fell under the power of France, though the value of their property might fall, it would not be entirely destroyed. This was a view of the case, however, which, politically speaking, would not lessen the injury to England. Indeed, with the possession of St. Domingo, with a port which almost commands our communication with our most important islands, it would become a most formidable neighbourhood to our colonial power, and in time of war would become a military station, from which we should be attacked; and a point which would give the enemy an opportunity to harass our trade. In fact, we have given up two continents to France. We have allowed her to be placed in a situation in which she will acquire such an influence over the American states, as at a future period, may enable her to employ them with advantage against our most important interests.—Such being the means of France, what is her will? Those who expected that the peace would disarm France of her hostility, who thought that she would be contented to cultivate the advantages of commerce and manufactures without animosity towards England, must now see that she pursues more than ever the grand object of universal empire. At every period before the preliminaries, and since, she has expressed, without disguise, the spirit by which she is animated; she proceeds like a general, changing his guards, sending out his parties, marking out his ground, and arranging his plan of operations. Every thing is conceived and conducted in the spirit of hostility; and after having succeeded in the war of swords, now terminated, she enters with the same disposition and with the same hopes upon the war of the Custom House.

What, then, are the means which Britain possesses, and how ought she to call them forth to ward off the dangers that assail us? In considering this, we must inquire what are moral resources, taking that word a good deal in the French sense. What is the mind to call forth, and how employ the physical means? In all animal life (and states may be considered as living bodies subject to the general laws of animated nature), it is observed that the foresight of danger is generally in proportion to the force and means which are enjoyed to escape from that danger. It appears to me that this nation has been more defective in the foresight of danger than in the means of repelling it. From this defect a great part of the calamities

Digitized by Google

of the country at this crisis have arisen. The nation has too much undervalued its danger, and its exertions have fallen short both of its means and of the occasion. At first, when the principles of the French revolution were at work, when other nations were actually in conflict with it, when the havock that it produced was seen in the example of others, it was said that all this would never reach us, that the menstruum might dissolve the base metals with which it came in contact, but would pass harmless over the pure gold of the British constitution. Men were not aware, that the character of the revolutionary principle was to prey both on good and bad, nay on the former in preference. In the year 1792 it was found, that the pure gold of the British constitution was as susceptible of the rage of Jacobinism, as copper of the corrosion of aqua fortis. But nevertheless there seemed to be a strange and extraordinary indifference to the state of Europe and to the progress of the hostile principle. "Snug" was the word. People were for leaving other nations to shift for themselves; the high spirit and the politic maxims of our ancestors were forgotten. Even when other nations stood forward in the common cause of nations, in our defence as well as their own, there was no alacrity to participate in their exertions. The nation seemed not only to have no disposition to engage in the war, but to display a new and singular anxiety to avoid it. From this view of the state of Europe, from this estimate of the nature of the danger, arose the conduct of the war after it had become inevitable. Differences of opinion existed as to the mode of carrying it on. There were persons of great abilities and high situations with whom I had the misfortune to differ on these views of things. Agreeing in many points with them, co-operating with them in a public capacity in leading objects, and respecting their talents and their motives, I was obliged to differ from them on the grounds at which I have hinted. The war was to be viewed either as an ordinary contest between two nations, and carried on upon the usual principle of annoying and weakening your antagonist, till he was brought to equitable sentiments; or we were to consider it as a new and extraordinary war, which could be carried on with a system suited to its portentous nature. Hence, therefore, it was to be carried on by attacking enemies colonies, capturing their ships, &c. or it was to be carried on by aiming decisive blows at the seat or centre of the system from which the true principle of the war and danger proceeded. I do not mean to say that these different plans were exclusive. I only mean that the one more peculiarly arose out of the one view of the case, the other out of the other. Those who preferred attacking the centre of the evil, did not think it wrong to aim at the advantages of the other, if the first failed; while those who directed their efforts to the colonies and marine of the enemy, were equally agreed that the restoration of monarchy was a desirable object. In none, however, as I have said, was the system exclusive. I shall not inquire which of these was the best. The one was tried, the other not; and whether that which was not tried would have succeeded, must remain a matter of judgment. I may add, however, that the plan which was not pursued, was that most conformable to my own opinions. Except early in the war at Toulon, and afterwards in the melancholy affair of Quiberon, there was little or nothing attempted upon what I thought the peculiar principle of the war, and upon that plan of conduct appropriate to it. As to the Quiberon expedition, at a time when the clamour was loudest against it, a right hon. friend of mine (Mr. Pitt), with great manliness and liberality, said in this House, that he took his full share of the responsibility. Yet, fully acknowledging the generosity of that conduct, I am ready to avow——

Mr. *Pitt*. I submit to the House, whether it be consistent with order for my right hon. friend to go into an historical account of opinions respecting the conduct of the war, particularly as that inquiry is not connected with any subject immediately under the consideration of the House. I beg leave also to submit to my right hon. friend, whether he can consider that the obligations of secrecy which were in force when he and others were his majesty's confidential servants, are now dispensed with?

Mr. *Windham*. I conceive that I was merely stating a circumstance personal to myself; and my right hon. friend would have seen, by the application that my explanation could not have been considered as any disclosure of state secrets. I was going to show, that, the country having misjudged the war, the conduct of it naturally partook of what I conceive to have been error.

Digitized by Google

What I say of the system of war, as in my judgment best suited to the circumstances of the late contest, is not an arraignment of my right hon. friend to whose department its conduct particularly belonged (Mr. Dundas). I can bear testimony to the diligence, the zeal, the activity, the ardour, and all the other great qualities which my right hon. friend displayed. I do not arraign the plan of my right hon. friend, neither do I divulge state secrets. I state what was no secret—that previous to the time when I came into public station, my right hon. friend had marked opinions on the subject of the war, and that we did differ in our views on the subject. When I was interrupted, I was labouring to show that the country had not rightly judged its situation, and that the mode of war pursued contributed to confirm their error. The country never knew sufficiently why it was at war. It has been said with great force and eloquence by my right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt), on different occasions, that we were at war for security; we were indeed at war, because we could not be at peace; we were at sea, because we could not be on shore. Yet though reminded of this, the character of the war itself, the grand monitor was wanting. The manner in which it was carried on did not sufficiently mark its nature. The force was centrifugal. It never converged enough towards the focus from which the danger proceeded. The question why we were at war, perpetually recurred; and people were not enough taught to see that we were at war, because the French government was such as to leave us no peace, and was necessarily in perpetual hostility with every thing which, as individuals and as a nation, it was our interest to defend. This error has pursued us into peace. No person who looked at the causes of war, could have looked at the terms of peace without alarm. The country, however, is not sufficiently impressed with the dangers of peace, because it was never perfectly alive to the character of the war.—But to return to the conduct of the war: although it has been unsuccessful in securing those objects which I thought peculiarly at stake, I do not say that it was wrong; I do not say that the course which I more approved would have been more fortunate. If I think it would, it is, as it were, reasoning from symptoms after death, that another method might have succeeded. It is, however, a matter of judgment. Entertaining this opinion still, I conceive it to be the duty of every man to correct the public error. It is better to think that the country had not seen its situation in a proper light, than that, aware of its real danger, we had failed in the means of repelling it. Great as the exertions of the nation have been, they have not been so great as they ought to have been compared either with the objects at stake, or the means we possessed. It is consolatory to think that the nation, not having seen the danger, will, seeing it, take the steps necessary to maintain its character and to ensure its safety. It is true, indeed, that there were those who perpetually urged the French cause, and by every act endeavoured to counteract those feelings of honour, magnanimity, and independence, by which nations can alone become great. If, however, the people of this country have utterly abandoned the feelings which every great nation should cultivate, and that policy without which no nation can flourish, we must have insensibly degenerated from the principles of our ancestors; and it will confirm the remark of the writer, who says, that sometimes a silent revolution takes place in the character of nations, as decisive as could be produced by the most violent convulsions. Never was there a war carried on with such an incessant cry for peace from the very beginning of it. In any other war, would it have been tolerated that the justice of our cause should be incessantly arraigned, and that of the enemy defended, in newspapers and other publications; that every one who endeavoured to rouse the public spirit should be vilified and abused? How could it have happened (if the people had been sufficiently impressed with the nature of the war), that it was doubtful whether the processions to St. Paul's to celebrate three of the most splendid victories this nation had ever gained, would have been received with applause? How else could it have happened, that attempts should be made to depreciate one of our most brilliant naval victories, and to show that the advantage was on the side of the enemy? To prove these circumstances, I should be obliged to produce files of newspapers and pamphlets. Yet what do I infer? Why, that such writings never could have obtained circulation, had there not been an indecision in the public mind on the subject of the war. It is with reluctance that I acknowledge this state of the public

Digitized by Google

mind to have prevailed. It certainly was not sufficiently awakened to a full sense of the nature of the danger that existed, or the extent of the exertion required. I am afraid that I shall be obliged to speak in a style not more pleasing of the means and resources which we possessed. Perhaps we have been too much in the habit of flattering ourselves on this subject on the efforts that we have made. Certainly, nothing is more agreeable than to "praise the Athenians among the Athenians;" but I rather consider it the duty of public men to speak wholesome truths. We must compare our exertions with the object. If the war was not originally just and necessary, every shilling spent was too much. If it was, as some have considered it, merely a war of experiment for a short time, to see what we could make of it, we have made too great sacrifices. If, however, it was a war for the very existence of the country, the exertions that we have made have been too little for the object, too little even for our means. That our exertions, however, had not injured us, would appear by considering whether the country has pined or thriven, whether it has become fat or lean, by its efforts. Surely if, as some pretend, the country has been ruined by the war, it has not been thrown into a galloping consumption. I have, indeed, heard it argued, in the true spirit of Jacobinism, that, though individuals are rich, the country is poor; every distress incident to man and to the social state has been insidiously represented to be the offspring of war: as if the same distress did not exist in all wars, nay, in all times; as if it were not obvious that poverty must ever accompany great wealth; as if poverty were not a sort of secretion from the plethoric habit of wealth. Indeed, it is easy to show how commercial wealth and poverty must be connected, because, in the fluctuations of trade and manufactures, numbers are occasionally deprived of their usual employment in one place, while the tide of prosperity rises higher in another. No less absurd is it to say, that the wealth with which the country abounds is in a few hands, as if it were possible that a country could have much wealth while it was monopolised by a few. Unhappily, indeed, it seems to be thought by some, who acknowledge both the wealth and comfort which this country enjoys, that these blessings may be preserved without the aid of arms. The balance of power is treated as an idle chimera; and we are told, that from our insular situation we may look with indifference on the confusion and derangement of the continent. It is very well, indeed, to tell us to preserve our own comforts; it reminds me of what a king of England said, when he was told that his subjects were dying of famine;—"Why," observed he, "do they not eat bread and cheese?" They could not get bread and cheese to eat. So we are told to be satisfied with our own comforts and happiness, with our commerce, with our prosperity. Doubtless; but will the French allow us? Do we not see that France is acting upon a contest with us in peace, that she is lowering our dignity, plucking our honours? The notion that peace would hush up all our dangers had induced us to give up to Holland the honour of the flag; which, though perhaps of itself of no essential importance, kept up the pride and spirit of the service, and has been maintained by us for a century and a half. This it was also which induced us to submit to have the cockades taken out of our soldiers' hats in Portugal. We also allowed, under the same idea, our ambassador to remain at Paris, kicking his heels near the hall of audience, as a lacquey, while Buonaparté, instead of communicating with him, sat off for Lyons, designedly, as it should seem, to furnish a precedent for similar insults on any future occasion.

Such being the situation and the feelings of the country, the next consideration is, what we ought now to do. On the supposition that Great Britain is at present in a state of infinitely less security than it was on the night when this treaty was signed, and comparing what it has given up with what remains to it, I have no hesitation in repeating my former assertion, that the fee-simple of the country was worth more on the 30th of September last, than it has been since, or perhaps ever will be again. We have now, however, signed and sealed the bond; and as Dogberry says—"I fear we shall never be our own men again." Our study should now be to correct those fatal dissentions which the treaty of peace may create. As to India, our rights are manifest, though we may depend on those same claims being renewed which were set up by France anterior to the treaty of 1783. But while our right is liable to be called into dispute, we should keep in our hands better means of asserting it than we

Digitized by Google

can have after the surrender of Malta, the Cape, and Cochin. The First Consul would not, during the negotiation, have gone to Lyons, if he did not mean to produce suspicion and uneasiness with respect to the peace. The ministers think that we have gone too far, and tried to remove the impediments to the renewal of claims, as if the foolish and silly French want us to point out to them the nature of their claims! Have they not shown, during the war, any designs upon India? Has not the capture of Seringapatam revealed any of their intrigues? What are we to surmise from their steadiness in insisting on the possession of Malta, the Cape of Good Hope, and Cochin? Was not the expedition to Egypt projected in the view of a triumphant march into Hindostan? And are we, like ostriches, to put our heads in a hole, and suppose ourselves perfectly safe from our pursuers, or act as persons in embarrassed circumstances, who are afraid to look at the state of their own affairs? If France means not to pursue its claims, why not send to Paris for explanations to that effect, before we give up what she never has put into our hands? A similar explanation should be required respecting the Bay of Honduras, and many other points. Let us have a fair understanding as to the extent of our danger. I know that some may be disposed to calculate the life of a nation like that of an individual; and, regardless of posterity, say,—"though our commerce may fail in the end, it cannot do so for a long series of years, and will, at least, last during our time." The nation which has not more foresight than that, must inevitably perish. Great stress has been laid on what is called the failure of the predictions respecting the result of the American war. These predictions, however, have been realized. If we had had America to support us, we never could have consented to such a peace. America has been of great service to the enemy during the war; and the convoy which entered France at the time of lord Howe's victory, was thought a sufficient compensation to that country for the destruction of its fleet. Let those who think this peace will furnish life and heat for their own ephemeral existence and that of the nation, take care that they do not deceive themselves. They may calculate ill who suppose the misfortune may not reach them. The fate of nations often comes quick upon them; in this manner is Spain, of late a rich and powerful nation, all on a sudden become one of those states which are now the vassals of France."—Mr. Windham concluded with moving,

"That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, to assure his majesty that we have taken into our most serious consideration the definitive treaty of peace which his majesty has been graciously pleased to communicate to this House:

"That we acknowledge, with all humility and submission, his majesty's undoubted prerogative of peace and war: and that we shall consider it to be our first duty, as far as may depend on us, to maintain inviolate the public faith, as it is pledged by this treaty, and to assist his majesty in performing, with uprightness and punctuality, the engagements into which his majesty has been advised to enter:

"But that we cannot conceal the painful apprehensions with which we consider the result of those engagements; nor can we forbear to offer to his majesty our humble and dutiful advice for the adoption of such measures as can alone, in our opinion, under the blessing of Providence, avert from us the dangers with which we are now surrounded:

"That it is impossible for us to have seen, without the utmost anxiety and alarm, all the unexampled circumstances which have attended the final conclusion of the present peace: the extensive and important sacrifices, which, without any corresponding concession, this treaty has added to those already made on our part by the preliminary articles: the unlooked-for and immense accessions of territory, influence, and power, which it has tacitly confirmed to France: the numerous subjects of clashing interest and unavoidable dispute which it has left entirely unadjusted: and, above all, those continued and systematic projects of aggrandisement, of which, in the very moment of peace, we have seen unhappily such undeniable and convincing evidence:

"That, by relinquishing so many sources of prosperity in peace, and so many bulwarks of defence in war, and by renouncing at the same time the advantage and security always hitherto derived from the accustomed renewal of former treaties, the British government has imposed on itself a greater necessity than has ever before existed for measures of increased precaution, and for determinations of unshaken constancy:

Digitized by Google

"That we, therefore, rely on his majesty's paternal wisdom for a watchful and unremitted attention to the situation and future conduct of the power with whom we have negotiated; and we think it necessary, more especially, to assure his majesty of our ready and firm support in that determination which we trust his majesty will henceforward steadily pursue, of resisting every fresh encroachment (of whatever nature) which shall be attempted on the maritime, commercial, or colonial rights and interests of the British empire:

"This our solemn declaration must, as we believe, materially conduce to prevent the necessity which it is calculated to meet; and we trust that his majesty will also approve of our desire to support it by a scale of naval and military defence, adequate to the extent of our danger, and to the importance of the interests which we have to maintain.

"The anxiety which we feel in this respect, is the necessary consequence of our sincere wish for the permanence of the public tranquillity which his majesty has now re-established: and it is for the same important purpose that we also most earnestly recommend to his majesty's wisdom, the pressing necessity of arranging, by immediate and amicable discussion, those points of essential interest which had been adjusted by former treaties, but for which no provision has been made in this negotiation:

"These counsels we submit to his majesty with confidence, in the present awful crisis of public affairs, prepared to meet with firmness all the difficulties and dangers of our present situation, but desirous above all things to promote the stability and security of real peace; the object which it has been his majesty's benevolent desire, by such extensive sacrifices, to ensure to his loyal and affectionate people."

Lord *Folkestone* seconded the motion, and observed, that the subject had been so ably argued by his right hon. friend, that little remained for him to add to it. He however could not avoid remarking, that in this treaty, not only a neglect, but a dereliction of our naval rights, was apparent, and the flag of Old England degraded. It was, therefore, impossible to approve of such a treaty: and he was unable to conceal that opinion; unable also was he to conceal, that when all other countries were supporting the faith of their ancient and respective treaties, Great Britain alone was neglectful of hers; and that when it was a first-rate principle with all other nations, to respect and value, as well as to protect their allies, Great Britain alone was regardless of hers, and ungrateful to those who had sacrificed all that was dear to them as nations in the general cause. We had entered into the contest under the avowed principle of asserting and protecting the rights of the house of Orange, and we had basely deserted her. We had made a show of our attention to that illustrious house, than which none ought to be more respected or valued in the eyes of this country, whose cause she early and effectually supported; and our return to her, in the hour of her necessity, is a vain and empty stipulation in words, but nothing solid or substantial. In the case of Portugal, our conduct was even more ungenerous; for we were not content with deserting her, but we committed her to the spoliation of her bitterest foes; though, in fact, it was not those foes who committed that spoliation—it was this country that tore from her Olivenza—it was this country that invaded and divided her territory of Louisiana. These were circumstances that must strike every thinking mind with horror and disgust; but he feared that all he could say upon these topics would have little weight. We had of late learned to appreciate the temporary advantage of commercial considerations so much above all other interests, that little was to be hoped from a state so besotted with avaricious sentiments of wealth. In the same impolitic view he beheld the surrender of Malta, and could impute it to nothing but an infatuation in the minds of ministers, who, not content with ceding the East and the West, and the privileges of the British flag in the North, now also resigned the Levant, and its best and only protector, Malta, into the very hands of our antient and mortal foe. For these reasons he thought the treaty disgraceful and dishonourable, and the address should have his most decided support.

Lord *Hawkesbury* rose and said:—Sir, I have listened with the utmost attention to the observations of my right hon. friend; and indeed it was impossible I should not; for though some parts of his speech were very remotely, if at all connected with the question before the House, yet the ability and ingenuity that he exhibited throughout peculiarly entitled him

Digitized by Google

a attention. A good deal of the speech f my right hon. friend consisted in pre-ictions as to the consequences and asser-ions, as to the conditions of the peace; ut I will assure him, and the noble lord who seconded his motion, that were the reaty such as they have described it—nd I considered it as by any means injurious to the interests—but particularly if it were degrading to the dignity of the coun-try; no man would be more ready to op-pose it than myself, whoever the author of it might be. I, however, view the ne-gotiation in quite a different light. I am of opinion, that, though some commercial questions were not finally arranged, it was better to leave those questions for future adjustment, than longer to defer the nego-tiation. I maintain, that peace, under all the circumstances, was desirable, and that it would have been extremely culpable in ministers to have declined it; but I would not be understood to insinuate that there was no other alternative for the country, or that the peace is to be considered in any point of view dishonourable. It is such as ministers have thought it expedient and prudent to conclude, and such as the House and the country called for. I am glad that the whole of this question is at length brought before the House. I have always objected to the discussion of it in parts, because, if ever there was a subject which ought to be discussed altogether, it is a treaty of peace. The parts must be examined with reference to each other, and not distinctly; for though in one part something unfavourable may appear, yet that, upon a review of the whole, will per-haps turn out to be a concession in order to obtain some advantage in another part. This question has at length come to that stage of investigation which I wished for. It seems to me to divide itself into two heads: first, whether the terms of the de-finitive treaty were consistent with the basis of the preliminary articles; and se-condly, whether, if any departure from the preliminary articles had taken place, that, or any events which had occurred during the negotiation, were of such con-sequence as to induce ministers to refuse to conclude the treaty? Before I proceed to remark on these heads, I beg leave to say a few words on the circumstances in which this country was involved at the time the negotiation was begun. It will be remembered, that we were then left almost alone to contend with France; Austria obliged to comply with a peace dictated by the enemy; the German em-pire at her mercy. Deserted by our allies except two, Portugal and Naples, neither capable of affording us any very effective aid, we saw ourselves, instead of being at the head of a formidable confederacy, me-naced by a league of our old allies, under the influence and direction of France. Such was our situation; and in this di-lemma peace was called for loudly by the country. It was pressed strongly by the gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, that some attempt should be made to negotiate. Accordingly, negotiation was entered into, and announced by mi-nisters to the House on the first oc-casion afterwards. But this negotiation commenced under prospects evidently very unfavourable, in the degraded state of Europe, after the treaty of Luneville, and when our ships were shut out from almost every port in Europe. Notwith-standing these disadvantageous appear-ances, ministers were determined to sus-tain the honour and consequence of the country, and in their proposal to nego-ciate, they laid down three principles as the rule of their conduct; first, the com-plete integrity of the dominions of the British empire; secondly, fidelity to our allies; and, thirdly, to obtain compen-sation out of the conquests we had made, to counterpoise the acquisitions of France on the continent. In these objects it was our firm purpose to persist, and the probability of our success in attaining them was considerably height-ned by some events which gave a pro-pitious turn to our affairs about that time—namely, the victory of the 2d of April in the Baltic, and the gallant conduct of our army in Egypt, particularly on the 19th of March, which not a little con-tributed to dispose the French government to peace: at all events, ministers meant to seek compensation in the East and West Indies, as that seemed the most ad-viseable principle. But as this sub-ject has been so fully canvassed in the debate on the preliminaries, I shall pass it, observing, that we have annexed to our dominions two of the greatest naval stations in the East and West Indies; not that I would argue this as a proof that the peace is more or less honourable on ac-count of this annexation; for, according to the doctrine that my right hon. friend holds out, it is not an island more or less, or any conquest whatever, that will con-stitute the security or the advantages of

Digitized by Google

peace. I doubt whether, in this view, any thing short of the total subversion of the French government would be satisfactory; but that I think must be now left entirely out of the question—that hope can scarcely exist in rational minds.

I shall now proceed to examine the division of the question which relates to the events that occurred pending the negotiations. I agree with the sentiment expressed by my right hon. friend the chancellor of the exchequer, on a former evening, that it was impossible to view some of those events without anxiety and alarm. So much for the points themselves: but it was gravely to be considered, how far these wants ought to have influenced the progress of our negotiation; or whether it would have been justifiable in ministers, on account of those events, to break off the treaty. I am no advocate for the opinion of some persons, that we ought to be insulated in our politics, as in our situation, and that we should have no concern in continental politics; nor can I subscribe to the doctrine of my right hon. friend, that we are on all occasions to volunteer in continental affairs; that an interference is not, as it would seem, a matter of choice but of obligation. This interference must at all times be determined by circumstances. Whether the power aggrieved, or where rights may be invaded, should feel any desire for our assistance, or any inclination to assert her own independence, were material to be considered; otherwise an interposition would be the height of extravagance. Our connexion with the continent is relative; and when we propose to interfere in its affairs, it is but wise to consider the amount of the interest that should prompt us; if the object could be carried, what the disposition of the power immediately benefited may be; and if we should lose, what degree of injury we were likely to sustain. Before we engage at all in such contests, the internal situation of our own country should be taken into consideration. I believe, on a review of the principal transactions that took place during the negotiation, the reasons which I have stated would apply with sufficient force to dissuade any British statesman from attempting to prevent it. God forbid that we should not be influenced by obligations of honour; or that we should give up the reputation of the country, by declining to protect any power from injustice! but a strong case should be made out to persuade us to an effort attended with risk to ourselves; for, the same reason which would induce an interference in favour of the Cisalpine republic, would urge us to insist upon the restoration of the Netherlands to Austria, of Holland to the Stadtholder, and of Savoy to the king of Sardinia. Even were we disposed to resist the accession of Buonaparté to the presidency of the Cisalpine republic, how could we have accomplished any thing without the aid of the continental powers? And how did the case stand? Buonaparté's newly-acquired power was scarcely announced, when the cabinet of Berlin congratulated him, that of Vienna acquiesced, and Russia showed no symptom of dissatisfaction. Would it, then, be considered wise or prudent in us alone to renew the war in consequence of this event? He would put the question to any gentleman in the House, whether the value of the object would even excuse such a resolution? Another event which is supposed to have changed the nature of our negotiation is, the cession of Louisiana to France. I do not consider this an indifferent object: but it will be recollected that Louisiana is an old French settlement, and that during the negotiation of the peace of 1763, the most triumphant peace this country had ever concluded, this settlement was privately transferred by France to Spain; and that transaction was much more gross than that now complained of, because Louisiana was referred to expressly in the treaty of 1763. As to the political advantages which France can derive from this possession, I doubt whether they are of much consequence; but I have little doubt that they are not of such consequence as to have justified ministers in rejecting the peace. Gentlemen have said a great deal of the influence which this possession threatens to give France over the United States of America. To this I shall mention, that it has been the policy of America, since its separation from this country, to keep an equal balance between France and us. Such was the system of general Washington, and such is the system of the ablest statesmen in America at the present day. The probability therefore is, that the possession of Louisiana now rendering France the natural rival of America, sound policy will incline her to cultivate a more intimate connexion with this country. But my right hon. friend apprehends

Digitized by Google

that France will be enabled, through this settlement, to swallow up America. He very much under-rates the power, population, and spirit of the United States; for he should remember what efforts the Americans made, and with success too, alone, and unaided, in the war of 1756, to resist the French who were then in possession of Canada and Louisiana. When, therefore, the increase of American power since that period is considered, though the possession of Louisiana by the French may now be an object to excite their jealousy and caution, it by no means endangers the independence of the Americans.

With respect to the definitive treaty, gentlemen complain of it on two grounds; namely, for faults of omission and commission. Under the first class the principal is the non-revival of the several commercial and political treaties, and two particular conventions. As to the first, I should suppose, if gentlemen would look into those treaties, they would not be so very solicitous for their revival. From the treaty of Westphalia, up to that of 1763, it was the practice, as the system of Europe was perpetually changing, to renew former treaties, with such alterations and additions as suited existing circumstances, until at length those treaties became so confused, inconsistent, and contradictory, as to contribute more to augment litigation than to produce the adjustment of any difference. If we made any engagements, they should be precise and explicit—not such as those treaties; besides, we ought to be cautious how we consented to multiply our engagements. Another objection that I have to the renewal of those treaties is, that we should bind ourselves too much. I shall state the former practice as to such renewal of treaties. In 1748, when we guaranteed the pragmatic sanction, we also guaranteed Silesia to Prussia. What, then, if, agreeable to such a precedent, we should have to guarantee the Netherlands and Sardinia to France? I would ask my right hon. friend, whether this was not a sufficiently strong objection to the renewal of former treaties? The situation of ministers in this case was one of extreme difficulty; they were rather willing to sacrifice some advantages than place themselves in the dilemma that I have described; and they determined, if they could not get Europe to do right, they would not be a party to her wrong. I would ask my right hon. friend, whether the renewal of political treaties, accompanied by such consequences, was so desirable? As to commercial treaties, if any person looked into them, they would be found not less objectionable than the former. Our treaty with Holland gave the Dutch the power of carrying warlike stores over in time of war to an enemy's ports. Would it be adviseable, after the experience of the last war, to renew such a treaty as that? Objections equally strong would be found to operate against the renewal of our former treaties with France. From these considerations, I think it will scarcely be disputed that it was better to leave commercial arrangements to be hereafter adjusted, than to postpone the conclusion of the definitive treaty, even if the country was to be left in the state it was in before the preliminaries were signed. I contend, that the inconvenience to our trade cannot be so great as gentlemen profess to fear; because, under all the obstacles of the war, our manufactures found their way into all parts of Europe; and no prohibition that can be imposed during peace, however severe or rigorously enforced, can put a stop to that intercourse. If any such interruption should be given to our commerce by the French government, it must be a matter of regret; but the extension of our resources, and our command in the markets, it is not in the power of France or any other nation to prevent. If it is to be a war of duties, we are more than equal to meet France; for her articles of commerce are few, ours are numerous: the exclusion of her brandies and wine would severely operate against her; and we could do without these liquors; but France cannot do without our manufactures; for they are articles of the first necessity. With regard to the East Indies, and the allusions to the stipulation in the treaty with the Dutch, respecting our flag and that of Holland, I shall say, as to the flag, it seems to be completely misunderstood by gentlemen. It is known that we have always claimed a right to superiority in the narrow seas of India, though we have scarcely ever insisted on it, except with regard to the Dutch, with whom we once disputed the right, and therefore in a treaty of peace a stipulation was introduced relative to the exercise of that right, and in every other treaty since this stipulation has been renewed: but it is not by any means tantamount to a renunciation of the right;

Digitized by Google

which we claim, not only with respect to Holland, but as to every other power, Gentlemen seem also to misconceive the nature of our right to cut logwood, &c. in the Bay of Honduras. The fact is, that right was ceded to us by the Spaniards in 1787, in return for some lands that we gave them on the Musquito shore; therefore, it is a settlement which we possess of right, and to which the Spaniards were as much bound to refer in the treaty as we were: it was, in truth, on our part no omission.

Gentlemen pointed their animadversions at the difference which they alleged to exist between the preliminaries and the definitive treaty, which they stated to consist in these five points, as to prisoners, Portugal, Newfoundland, the Cape of Good Hope, and Malta. In these are comprised what are called the faults of commission. As to the first, the state of the question is this: in the treaty of 1763, an article was inserted, that every belligerent power should maintain its own prisoners; and that article was again renewed in the peace of 1783; it is an article which humanity and justice approves, and is sanctioned by the best modern authors on the law of nations, among whom is Vattel: but the French disputed this principle with us in the late negotiation; alleging, that they did not grant it to any of the other powers with which they had concluded peace. When, therefore, they afterwards acceded to this principle, we could not claim a modification of it in our own favour, by refusing to allow a deduction for the subsistence of the Russian prisoners who were soldiers in our pay, and under our disposal when made prisoners. With regard to Portugal, some time after I came into office, it was thought by ministers that the Portugueze might make a much firmer stand than they did against France and Spain: and it was determined to send advice to Portugal, as to the means of resistance; and I have no hesitation in saying, that one part of that advice was, to place a more able officer at the head of their army; an advice not dictated by any disrespect to the officer then commanding, but merely because from his age he was deemed incapable. This advice, however, was not attended to; had it been, it was intended to follow it up with some succours; but ministers would have been culpable if they had committed any part of the British army to the care of an incapable commander. Notwithstanding this conduct of Portugal, ministers took means to communicate to them the progress we were making in negotiation, and the prospects that we had; exhorting her to hold out as long as possible, that she might obtain better terms; yet she concluded a separate peace. We afterwards stepped in, and by our interference reduced the extent of the cessions that she had herself agreed to make in Guiana—an instance of liberality scarcely to be paralleled. We so arranged it for her, that her navigation of the river Amazon is perfectly secured, and not at all exposed to that interruption from the possessions which the French had obtained by the treaty that gentlemen on a former evening so strenuously maintained, upon the authority of a map not quite so accurate as they have been taught to believe. As to the third point of difference, Newfoundland, no concession was made to France in that article; the arrangement is precisely as it stood before the war, therefore no animadversion has been made on it. The Cape of Good Hope, which forms the fourth point, has called forth many observations; but if gentlemen would more attentively compare the terms of the preliminary and the definitive treaties, they would see that the Cape was to be surrendered, in full sovereignty, to the Dutch, and that there is no material difference between the two treaties on this head. In the opinions of persons best qualified to judge of the Cape, it was thought more advisable to give it up thus to the Dutch, than to make it an *entrepôt* in the hands of any other power.—Gentlemen dwelt upon Malta as the fifth point of difference. As to that I shall say, that whether the arrrangement of that island be as good a one as could be contrived or not, it is as good a one as circumstances would permit. Gentlemen could not expect that we should retain it ourselves; for, when we blockaded it, we issued a declaration, that it was not our intention to retain it, but to restore it to the order of St. John, under certain regulations. The first object of those regulations was to ameliorate the condition of the Maltese, and at this gentlemen seem to level their principal hostility. They are averse to the privileges granted to the inhabitants; they do not seem to think of the important point we have gained, in the abolition of the three French langues, which had much domineering influence in that island—leaving only the Russian langue,

Digitized by Google

and creating a Maltese langue. Gentlemen would not be so disturbed at the creation of this langue, or at the privileges given to the natives, if they would recollect the conduct of those natives during the siege, when, under a British officer, they were so active in their exertions to annoy the French, and to second our views: surely such men were entitled to our peculiar protection, and had some claim to be relieved from the oppression to which they were liable under the antient constitution. Is it not of consequence to the security of the island to conciliate the population to the order, and thus enable that order to establish a formidable militia for its defence. A power to guarantee it, with a view to preserve it from the dominion of France, was also chosen; that guarantee, was, in fact, first offered to Russia; but such is the change in the politics of courts, that Russia refused; and it was therefore put under the protection of Naples—a country which has the deepest interest, from the contiguity of the island of Sicily, to take care that Malta should not fall into the hands of France. This is not all; we have the guarantee of Austria and the principal powers of Europe, for the independence of this island. Under all the circumstances, I think there is no real departure in the definitive treaty from the basis of the preliminary articles; and I also think that no event which occurred in the interim could excuse a departure from the negotiation. From the language of gentlemen, they seem to fear that we have lost all by the peace; but I am decidedly of opinion, that we never stood at the conclusion of any treaty of peace in so good a relative situation to France as at present. It was said, on a former day, that we should have endeavoured to secure a port in the Mediterranean, for the advantage of our trade; but the House must be aware that Holland, while it had the most important trade in the Levant, never had a port in the Mediterranean. In that trade they were enabled to exceed us, in consequence of certain injudicious regulations as to quarantine, which parliament abolished about two years ago, but which while existing gave the Dutch the opportunity of underselling us in all the northern ports. It is rather singular, while gentlemen speak so much of Louisiana and other comparatively unimportant additions to French power, that they never allude to our conquest of the Mysore—the destruction of that power which was the staunch ally of France, and the inveterate enemy of this country. What is our relative situation to France in the East Indies? Who will answer by attempting a comparison? And is not our situation in the West almost equally superior? Our islands almost trebled in produce during the war, with the addition of one of the most fertile islands in the West Indies, containing a capacious harbour, and forming the first naval depot in that quarter. What a monopoly of all the European markets for West India produce do we not possess! And when are we to expect any rivalship from France, whose principal colony, St. Domingo, is in such a distracted state, that whatever may be the event of the war in that island, it must be left little better than a waste? It will be recollected, that the returns of France from the West India trade were no less before the war than eight millions annually, and that she derived from this source a considerable balance of trade in her favour; but what are her prospects now? Indeed, if the naval and commercial means of the two countries be duly compared after the events of the war, the power of France will in most respects appear more specious than solid, while ours will be found solid and safe, and supplied moreover with the means of extending itself by the extent of our capital. France possessed no such means, and, in his opinion, it was better to possess more capital and less territory. For the extended dominion of France was liable to fall to pieces; its extent was matter of weakness, and the multiplicity of her objects must frustrate their accomplishment. The comparative superiority of our resources, when our superior capital was attended to, could not therefore be denied. But what was our security for the enjoyment of these advantages? This question he might answer by saying, that, under all the circumstances of our situation, we had made an honourable peace—a peace that secured all the vital springs of our strength and power. He was ready, however, to confess that the state of the world was such as could not prevent us from considering the peace as insecure; but all history, and even his own experience, taught him, that the apprehension of that insecurity should be no obstacle to the conclusion of peace, when peace could be concluded on honourable terms. When a good one was within our reach,

Digitized by Google

we ought to seize it, though we might not be confident of its permanent enjoyment. Here the noble lord referred to the peace of Ryswick; which, though deemed by king William insecure, and not so advantageous as might be expected, was, notwithstanding, deemed by that wise prince such as should not be rashly rejected. He wished gentlemen would bear in their recollection the speech of king William to his parliament on that great occasion, and they would there find the sentiments which they should now entertain; they would see that it would be for them not to permit the enemy to do that in peace which they were not able to effect in war. He did not pretend to say that the security of peace was no consideration; all he should ask was, could a better peace have been secured, had the contest been protracted longer? If not, was it not better to take the chance of it, such as it could be obtained, under all the circumstances of our situation? In acceding to that peace, there was another motive which weighed heavily with him, and which no doubt must have had great weight with the House—he meant the internal state of France. France had now abandoned the principles and maxims of the revolution, and was rapidly reverting to the ancient principles of religion and civil order. The current ran that way; and would it be wise, by renewing the contest, to replunge her in all the horrors from which she had so lately emerged, and which threatened to agitate the rest of the world? Much had been said of the ambition of France, and of the views of her present rulers; but the ambition of France was the ambition of the French people, and was the same under the monarchy as under her present form of government. Neither view should make him hesitate respecting the eligibility of a peace which enabled us to escape out of a disturbed state of things, with our financial system and all our resources entire. It was not merely an alleviation of their burthens that the people languished for; but they were anxious for peace, because their patience was worn out by the war: they sighed for the termination of a struggle that had lasted nine years, and which they were reluctant to continue without any definite object. If our interests remained entire, if our honor was preserved, for what purpose should the war have been longer persisted in? He would not waste the time of the House in dwelling longer upon this topic; but as a day had been appointed, and a motion made for taking the treaty into consideration, he did not think the House should separate without coming to an opinion upon it. Of those who thought the peace dishonourable, that it affected our vital interests, and left us in a state of doubt and insecurity, he could not expect the support; but he was as confident, that those who thought our honor had been preserved; that the terms on which peace had been concluded were as good as, under all the circumstances of our situation, could have been expected; and that a peace which left our resources entire should be adhered to, that they might be husbanded for vigorous resistance against any future encroachment, would vote for the amendment which he should have the honor now to propose. The noble lord then concluded by moving an Amendment, by leaving out from the first word "That," in the second paragraph, to the end of the question, in order to insert these words: "We have already declared our full approbation of the preliminary articles of peace, which, by his majesty's command, were laid before this House; and we are satisfied that his majesty has, on the whole, wisely consulted the interests of his people in having concluded a definitive treaty, founded on the basis of these preliminaries: that, although we deeply lament the calamitous events which have taken place on the continent of Europe in the course of the war, we cannot but reflect, with the utmost satisfaction, that the wild and destructive designs with which this country was threatened at its commencement, have been effectually frustrated: that his majesty's dominions have not only been preserved entire, but valuable and important acquisitions have been annexed to them: that our commercial and maritime superiority have been maintained and improved; and that we continue in the confirmed possession of those means of exertion which the experience of the late contest has proved more than ever to be equal, even amidst the new and unexampled difficulties of other nations of Europe, to maintain the independence, and assert the honor of this country: that, impressed with these sentiments, we are, on our parts, earnestly solicitous to cultivate and improve the blessings of peace, and to concur in such measures as his majesty, in his wisdom, shall judge to be best calculated to pre-

Digitized by Google

t occasions of misunderstanding with ign powers: that we rely on his ma- y's known disposition to adhere, with most scrupulous fidelity, to his en- agements; but that we entertain, at same time, a perfect confidence, that majesty will not fail to employ that ance and attention which the present tion of Europe demands; and, above hat his majesty will be uniformly de- ined, and prepared to defend, against y encroachment, the great sources of realth, commerce, and naval power e empire: that we are fully persuaded his majesty's faithful subjects will, at mes, be ready to support the honor is majesty's crown, and the rights, and liberties of their country, with same zeal, energy, and fortitude, h they have invariably manifested g the war now happily brought to a usion."

. *Wellesley Pole* seconded the mo- and corroborated and illustrated the ients of the noble lord who preceded

. *Thomas Grenville* said, that the lord seemed to rest the whole of his ce on the merits of the definitive ; yet, at the conclusion of his h, he had entered into a justification and owned that the people were out with the war, and clamoured ace. In this he was not prepared to sce; for the people were alive to liberty and independence even to est period of the war, and con- to think it necessary up to the very y of the preliminaries: he could not, ore, hear it said that their patience orn out by the contest. Another of exaggeration which had been red by the noble lord was such as ld not pass over. That noble per- d asked, whether no peace was to epted and whether no terms could ured by his opponents. He had this unfair mode of arguing still ; for he had asked, whether the war have been continued for Malta, for na, or for the Italian republic, as lated by Buonaparté with that of ? Mr. Grenville said, he was e of those who would have ob- to any terms. About two years e was deputed by the then admi- on to negotiate a peace; and he y should not have accepted of the , if he had not been inclined to te on honourable and safe terms. He thought it, however, unfair to put the question of peace or war on the ground of each individual sacrifice made by this country; and particularly, as in the affair of the Italian republic, where an enormous addition was to be superadded to the sacrifices already made. He would much rather argue the question on this broad and general ground—"Will you suffer the enemy to do you that mischief in time of peace, which they could not effect in time of war?" We had given up the Netherlands; we had lost sight of Holland; and yet the argument was now so managed as if the evil was cured, instead of being increased by the mass of cessions. He was not for going to war again for any one of these, or for the whole of them; but he must desire, that, considered as a whole, they should not be kept entirely out of the question. He could not, for instance, but notice the accession of weight and influence which France had received by the ceding of Louisiana. This was a matter settled in a secret convention, and kept wholly out of view when the limits of French Guiana were debated, on a view of the preliminaries. Did ministers conceal, or were they aware at that time of this convention? This was a subject on which an explanation was due to the House. They had been told, it was true, that there was in this part no naval station; but he must ask, whether this cession did not command the two Floridas; and whether, in the case of a new war, the cession of the one was not, in point of fact, a cession of the whole? This question he had pressed before; but unfortunately he had pressed it without effect. On the Island of Elba he should not offer one syllable, because that question had already been debated. The ministers had exulted in the non-renewal of treaties, considering their renewal as a matter which was fraught with danger, doubt and insecurity. They had rejoiced in this as if they had been sent on a voyage of discovery, though, at the same time, they abandoned the beaten track of all their predecessors. These treaties, however, he must observe, had often replaced the security and refixed the boundaries of disturbed Europe. There were difficulties, no doubt, in this instance, arising from the new limits of the Rhine and the cession of the Netherlands. But these difficulties could not be admitted to supersede the advantages arising from the renewal and recognition of former treaties. He would

Digitized by Google

admit that our late enemy was not easily to be bound or debarred by treaties of this description from the objects of his ambition; but he was not prepared to accede to the statement of a right hon. gentleman last night, that these treaties were only worth so much waste paper. It was said by some persons, that we should sanction the ambitious projects and attainments of France, by entering specifically into those treaties. It was to be recollected, however, that Buonaparté, pending the congress of Amiens, had set out on his mysterious journey to Lyons. We afterwards knew, and of course lent an implied sanction to, the object of this journey; for, though not expressly described, our recognition, when the matter was fully known, was not the less given to the establishment of the Italian republic. A difference, he was aware, had been laid down between all treaties considered as commercial and political. He was convinced that we could not renew a treaty which had expired, or enforce one which was not agreeable; and such, no doubt, was the case with the commercial treaty made with France in 1787. This, however, did not imply or sanction the exclusion of any treaty whatsoever. With respect to India, it was contended, that all firmauns of the native powers, as well as our own treaties, were cancelled by the war, and that we stood on the distinct claim of our sovereignty. But we pronounced on our own right, without considering what was the opinion of France, with respect to claims which in the late treaty she had not recognised. A right hon. gentleman (Mr. Dundas) condemning, for the first time, the treaty of peace in 1783, had said, that he was equally happy to get rid of the poison of that treaty, and of its antidote, administered in 1787. This opinion was evidently changed, when the same right hon. gentleman gave his assent to the treaty of Lisle in 1796. Mr. Grenville then proceeded to remark on our exclusion from cutting of logwood in the Bay of Honduras, the access to which was assured by former treaties with Spain, which now were all extinguished, and the advantages of which would be but ill repaid by a return to the Musquito shore, now a shore without settlements. On all these occasions he was for a limited right, settled by a convention, rather than for a general and perhaps an unadmitted claim. He next proceeded to notice the situation of the House of Orange, whose claims had been loosely passed over in the definitive treaty. By a separate convention, it was, in fact, determined that that House should not have one stiver of compensation which was not to be drawn from this country. On the relinquishment of the honour usually paid to our flag by Holland, the hon. gentleman severely animadverted. He then observed, on the article by which the payment of the debt due for the maintenance of prisoners was regulated. The House were told, that the Russian troops, being not merely under pay, but subject to our control, ought to be considered in the same light as the native troops of this country. But was this really the fact? It certainly was not. The Russian troops, who were fed, clothed, and arrayed at our expense, were so far from being destined to the service of this country, that they were to be employed to act offensively against us. The French government had succeeded in detaching the emperor of Russia from our friendship; and this was the boon which they presented to gratify their capricious ally. On the subject of the article respecting Portugal, the noble lord had said, there was no deviation from the preliminaries of peace, by which the integrity of her territories is secured. Yes—this integrity had been a ground of stipulation; but of what description was the integrity which was secured? Was it integrity of possessions as they existed antecedent to the war? No, said the noble lord; but Portugal had obtained an integrity of possession, which, when the matter came to be investigated, turned out to be a mere definition of limits He would not enter into any geographical statements; but he could not avoid making one remark with regard to these limits. The noble lord talked of a distance of 50 miles, established by the new limits, which had been fixed from the river of the Amazons. How such a distance could exist, he was quite at a loss to conceive, when he reflected that the Arawari flowed into that very river. While he was on this subject he wished to say a few words on the obligations of this country to procure for Portugal, not an integrity of the kind now described, but integrity of a substantial nature. He was not disposed to question the policy of the late administration, in preferring the expedition to Egypt to the defence of Portugal. But what was the inference to be drawn from this arrangement? It was, that if we did not grant an old and faithful

Digitized by Google

ally assistance, in a moment of difficulty and danger, we were bound by every consideration of public faith, to take care that her interests should not suffer from our preferring other objects to that of affording her protection against an enemy who had attacked her independence. This was the conduct which good faith clearly dictated; and he was amazed to hear the language of the noble lord in justification of the vague provision which the definitive treaty had made to secure this object. What was the natural effect of even a dereliction of the interests of our ally? It was, to estrange Portugal from our interests, and to create a spirit of hostility to a power by whom her interests had been so grossly neglected.—On the article relative to the Cape, he had only one observation to make; and that was, that, by the arrangement which had been agreed upon, the Dutch might make it a free port; and thus we might lose all the advantages of the arrangement previously established by the treaty.—He next touched on Malta, the regulations respecting which he censured in very severe terms. In the preliminaries, Malta was made independent; but it now appeared that this declaration of independence had been made while ministers were ignorant of the arrangements by which this independence was fixed. The order was to be restored; but how was the restoration of an order to be effected, all of whose funds were lost, gone, and dispersed? From an average of ten years previous to 1798, it appeared that 130,000*l.* constituted the whole annual revenue. To the three French langues 58,000*l.* formerly belonged, the whole of which was confiscated. The whole of the revenues of the Spanish langue consisted of 27,000*l.* and this sum was also confiscated; or if the appropriation had not already taken place, it was likely to be so at no very remote period.—After estimating other losses in Germany, Poland, and Bavaria, the total of the provinces left did not much exceed 23,000*l.* a year; and this was the sum allotted for the support of the order to be restored! What, on the other hand, was the amount of the expense annually incurred on an average of ten years? It was not less than 130,000*l.* The island was declared to be independent under the protection of a third power. But, was the king of Naples, by whom this protection was to be afforded, himself independent? Was he not, on the contrary, totally dependent on the power of France? To remedy this defect, however, and to secure this independence, the House was called upon to consider the powerful guarantees which had been established. On a former occasion, the noble lord had stated, that the accession of some of these powers to this arrangement had not been received. But, admitting that they would accede, what was the consequence? France was the guaranteeing power nearest in situation to the island whose independence was to be secured. From the new constitution given to the order, and the establishment of a new langue, tumults and broils might arise in the island. France, as an amicable guaranteeing power, might immediately interfere; a squadron might sail from Toulon, and take possession of the island before the design was suspected; and it was not easy to say what new changes would be introduced before these troubles were quelled. The hon. gentleman concluded by saying, that the original address had his cordial approbation.

Mr. *Dundas* took that opportunity of noticing some misrepresentations of what he had said last night. A right hon. gentleman alleged, that he had applied his observations to the convention of 1787, as containing evil provisions, which we ought not to renew. He had done no such thing. His argument was this, that the merit of the convention of 1787 depended solely upon this, that it applied an antidote to the poison of the treaty of 1783; the meaning of which was, that the convention of 1787 had the merit of counteracting the treaty of 1783; but he had not said, that either the one or the other of them was the foundation of the prosperity of India. The right hon. gentleman had put it to him, how he reconciled his conduct in assenting to the negotiation at Lisle, by which the provisions of the convention of 1787 were stipulated to be assented to on our part? His answer was this; that since the year 1797, the condition of this country in India was changed most materially, and that which might have been offered in 1797, and was then offered, would have been improper on our part in 1802. In 1797, we had not what we now possessed, namely, the undoubted sovereignty of India; and therefore, whatever opinion he had in 1797, he was perfectly warranted in changing that opinion in the present

Digitized by Google

instance; for, in the one case we were warranted in demanding more than in the other. In both instances he had been desirous that this country should have the best possible terms of security for its tranquillity in India. Did the right hon. gentleman mean to make it matter of reproach to him, that he had changed his opinion as to our situation in India, upon a change of circumstances there? Did he mean to say, that, although he could discover a material change of circumstances in our situation, yet there was to be no change in his opinion as to the conduct which we were to pursue? Did he mean to urge it as a fault in him, that he had, upon an attentive perusal of documents, from 1763 down to the present period, become of opinion that our sovereignty in India was now entire; and, as he was of opinion that we were better off in this respect by not renewing any treaty than if we had, that he should endeavour to impress that opinion on the House? He believed that the noble person who had been alluded to (lord Grenville) stated an opinion, much as he had done on the ground of our sovereignty in India, and that he had changed the opinion he had first entertained on this subject. But he would now say a few words on the question now before the House. When he heard of the manner in which the Cape of Good Hope was to be disposed of, he heard it with regret and sorrow. He had always considered that place as a great acquisition to this country. He was of that opinion before we had it; he was confirmed in that opinion by experience since it was in our possession. He looked upon it as a good depôt, and a place for the reception of our troops when we had occasion to send them to India: by their being landed and refreshed there, they went to India full of health and vigour, and were fit for immediate service. It helped us in the course of our immense fleets on their way to India. He looked upon the Cape and Ceylon as our two great bulwarks, and at no period of his life had he been of another opinion on this subject. No connexion, however close—no friendship, however cordial—no attachment, however sincere should induce him to withhold his opinion upon this subject. That opinion was, that the Cape of Good Hope should not have been given up by this country; and had he been in administration, nothing should have induced him to be a party in agreeing to a peace, by which this country was to abandon the Cape. He felt this sentiment still more strongly on account of the connexion that was now established between France and Batavia. He considered the Cape as almost invaluable to us, as a place of safe reception to us between Asia and Europe; but, although this was his opinion, yet he did not hold it to be any part of his duty to join those who took so much pains to render the peace an object of disapprobation with the people: he saw no good that was likely to arise out of that conduct; neither did he think it was proper to cavil too much at that part of the exercise of the prerogative of the crown, although it was done, of course, under the advice of ministers. With regard to Malta, he considered it also as a place of great value, on account of the communication it had between the Mediterranean and the Levant. It was one of the finest ports in the world. It was, in a commercial view, most important for us to retain; but it was not in a commercial view that he felt the full importance of this place. He felt its value much more on account of the effect it would have, on surrounding nations, to see the flag of Great Britain hoisted as an assurance to all who passed it, of the protection of the British arms, should she chance to stand in need of it; and when he came to add to this the desire of the Maltese to continue under our protection, he was the more induced to express his regret that this place had been given up. He had therefore no difficulty in saying, that, under all the circumstances, he could not have assented to the giving up of either of these places had he been in administration.—But now for the immediate question before the House. He could not agree to the address moved by his right hon. friend, because it commenced with an invective against the peace. He saw no good likely to arise from that course of proceeding. In 1783, when a peace was made, after it was admitted to be necessary on all hands, that peace was afterwards made use of by parties in that and the other House of parliament, as an organ to destroy the administration who made it. He did not like the purpose for which the parties then decried that peace: as little did he like the course which was taken now against this peace. He had stated the points in the present case in which he did not concur; but he desired to be understood as not being a party to any such confederacy.

Digitized by Google

He agreed, on the whole, with the amendment; and had it not been moved, probably he should have moved some amendment himself. The first address, if agreed to, he apprehended might do mischief. He approved of the amendment, because the general tendency of it was only to approve of carrying into effect the definitive treaty, because it was founded on the basis of the preliminary treaty, which had already been approved of by the two Houses of parliament.

General *Gascoyne* seeing many gentlemen desirous to deliver their sentiments, and considering the lateness of the hour (two o'clock), moved, that the House should adjourn till to-morrow.—The question of adjournment being put,

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, his own feeling was in favour of a decision before the House should part. It was the interest of the country also, that no delay should take place. On the other hand, he was extremely desirous that the subject should have a full investigation. If, then, there were so many gentlemen desirous to deliver their sentiments, the propriety of giving them an opportunity to say every thing that could be said upon the subject was such, that he thought every feeling of his own, and the public consideration should give way

Mr. *Pitt* observed, that if any considerable number of members were desirous of promoting a more minute inquiry, he was ready to accede to the motion of adjournment. But, for himself, he was perfectly satisfied with the tone and spirit of the address, as it was amended, as well as with the arguments so ably and successfully used by his noble friend. In favour, therefore, of the amendment, he should have contented himself with giving a silent vote. When he reviewed what had already fallen in the course of the debate, he saw no prospect of any new arguments which might be supposed capable of making any serious impression on the minds of gentlemen, and of changing their opinions as they existed on either side. His noble friend had made but one speech, and those who disapproved of the peace had delivered three or four. As he saw no probability that any additional arguments of importance would be thrown out in the course of farther investigation, he should press an immediate decision on the amendment.

Mr. *Grey* said, that however he might be disposed to vote against the address, he was less inclined to oppose the amendment; for, though he could not help thinking that the dangers of the country were greater by the definitive treaty, than by their preliminary articles, yet he was convinced, upon the whole, that his majesty was well advised to put an end to the contest.

The question being put, "That the debate be adjourned till four of the clock this afternoon;" the House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Mr. William Smith -	185
	General Gascoyne -	
Noes	Mr. William Dundas -	137
	Mr. Sargent - - -	

So it was resolved in the affirmative; and at three in the morning, the House adjourned.

May 14. The adjourned debate being resumed, and the Speaker having read the Address proposed by Mr. Windham, and the amendment moved by lord Hawkesbury,

Sir *W. Young* observed, that the noble lord who moved the amendment had said, that the peace was to be considered as a whole. Now he and his friends thought it impossible well to consider a whole, without attentively observing the parts which formed that whole, and the quality of the materials of which it was composed. If the address moved by his right hon. friend produced no other effect than the amendment proposed by the noble lord, he should consider that it had not altogether failed; for, although he preferred the original address, still he was glad to see such a document come from the hands of his majesty's ministers; for the amended address seemed to confess what the original address proclaimed; the object of the original address being to call the country to a sense of its danger, to show her the precipice on which she stood, and the means of her salvation. As to the difference between the preliminaries and the definitive treaty, he should first advert to the observations that had been made respecting Malta. It had had been said, that the treaty gave a preponderance to the Maltese langue; that they were to fill at least half the offices of the state, and might be expected to form a sufficient militia, for the protection of that island. Gentlemen who held that language seemed little acquainted with Malta or its inhabitants. He had himself resided there for

Digitized by Google

ten weeks. In the whole island there were not five men who could be called merchants; could it then be expected that an order, which valued itself on its high nobility, could associate with persons of the description of gold workers and sellers of coral in the administration of the island? If a few could so far degrade themselves, their votes would be lost in the opinion of the majority; and the island of Malta would then, instead of being restored to the order of St. John of Jerusalem, be in fact given up to the democracy of the Maltese. That this would be the consequence was still farther apparent from this circumstance, that the noble knights of the other langues seldom visited the island: and therefore the management of its affairs, and all the influence attending it, must fall into the hands of the Maltese langues, which would soon be such a democracy as he had represented. Another important part was the cession of Louisiana from Spain to France, directly in the teeth of the stipulations of the treaty of Utrecht, and many other treaties, wherein this country (properly jealous of the increasing connexion between France and Spain) bargained that Spain should not cede any parts of her empire to France. He differed from the noble lord in his opinion respecting the value of Louisiana; he thought that, both from its real value and its situation, hanging over Mexico, it was a most important acquisition to France. The probable re-conquest of St. Domingo by the French was, in his view, a subject of much danger to our West India possessions; he should think them much safer, were Domingo to be a Negro republic, than to have that large and fertile island in the hands of France. At present France would require a very large army there, to conquer it, and to maintain its conquest: but it must be recollected, that when peace should be restored, the army which they would always keep up in the island, and which we could not prevent them from keeping up, would always, in case of a dispute between this country and France, be sufficiently strong to threaten the existence of all our settlements in the West Indies. The value of St. Domingo to France was incalculable; the French part alone was formerly worth all our settlements in the West Indies, and employed above 700 heavy ships in its trade. Now that the whole island was in the hands of France, much more commerce and colonial productions must be expected from it, and a new nursery of seamen was opened for the French navy. Besides the danger that impended over our own West India settlements. The perilous situation of Mexico was also to be considered, which now lay in a manner at the foot of France. When France was in possession of St. Domingo and Louisiana, if a dispute should arise with Spain, and a French standard was unfurled and pointed to Mexico, what myriads of adventurers would join it. The conquest of Mexico would present no difficulties to France; she can have it now, whenever she would. Such were the incalculably valuable acquisitions that France had obtained by the peace, in the West Indies! In Europe and in every quarter of the world, she had exhibited the same spirit of adventure and desire of aggrandizement. She had possessed herself of the Italian republic, and the island of Elba. Was it, then, to be supposed that France would fail to benefit of this new vantage ground, on which she now stood; or that she would not, so soon as her strength and resources were at the proper pitch, pour destruction, military and commercial, upon all the powers by which she is surrounded? It had been said that capital was a tyrannic power, which could at all times secure monopoly and defeat every attempt to meet it by any other principle in the field of commerce. Such was the boasted power of British capital; but even those who used that argument, were aware that persevering industry was the source of capital. It was to truly British and legitimate industry and commerce that we owed the extent of our wealth; and therefore it was more peculiarly the duty of those who negotiated this treaty, to have looked with a jealous eye to the maintenance of our commerce with the ports of the Mediterranean, where existed the principal marts of consumption for our linen and cotton manufactures. With respect to the cession of Spanish territory in America to France, it was an act in direct violation of the treaty of Utrecht; and it was a ground, in his mind, upon which, notwithstanding the treaty of peace, it was the duty of ministers to have appealed to Spain, and endeavoured to procure an adjustment less calculated to excite apprehensions, as well in Spain herself, as in Great Britain. Upon the whole, however, though the definitive treaty was one to which he never would have agreed to set his hand, yet,

‡

Digitized by Google

that it was concluded, he thought the
try bound to maintain it inviolate.
in that faithful observance of the
y it was the duty of this country to
erpetually vigilant against similar de-
, which France, tempted by her
r and her ambition, might be induced
editate. From the nature and extent
at power, the attack, whenever it
d come, might be expected to come
enly; and when he considered France
ossessing in Europe a line of coast
the Netherlands to Italy, together
her influence in the other ports of the
terranean, her new acquisitions in
East and in the West, he trusted that
ajesty's government would be jea-
y alive to the necessity of maintaining
times such a military and naval es-
hment at home and abroad, as would
ompetent to enable this country to
sume hostilities with security and
, whenever it should unfortunately
ne necessary. He concluded by
orting the original motion.

rd *Castlereagh* said:—I feel consider-
reluctance, Sir, in troubling the
e upon a subject that has already
so ably and so fully discussed; but
it solicit a few moments of your at-
on, while I state the reasons which
e me to concur in the address moved
y noble friend. It appears to me
the question may be resolved into
points; namely, how far the late
y has provided for our security; and
ner it might be better provided for
farther prosecution of the war? But
e I come to a more immediate consi-
ion of these two points, I wish to be
ged in a few observations upon the
great features which the discussion
s to have hitherto assumed. What I
e to are, the alterations that have
place in the relative situation of the
ountries between the signing of the
minaries and the conclusion of the
tive treaty, and the proceedings
the British government should have
ated in consequence of those altera-

As to the events that have taken
upon the continent, I agree, that
are extremely important in their
e, and that as such they might have
the ground of a new consideration;
might be deemed sufficient to justify
aking off of the treaty, or at least a
ad for an equivalent. But in making
y mind on this part of the question,
k it my duty to examine how far it
bears on the general question. Did these alterations so endanger our security, as to make it wise in ministers to break off the negotiation? I cannot really consider them of that magnitude with regard to us. But have ministers made any attempt to obtain an equivalent? They may, or they may not, as far as I can pretend to say. But what could be that equivalent, the failure to obtain which would have justified them in breaking off the treaty? I am rather inclined to agree with my noble friend, that neither the alterations that have taken place subsequent to the signing of the preliminaries, nor an endeavour to obtain an equivalent, could have warranted ministers, who acted on the principle of our own security, to forbear bringing the treaty to a final conclusion. The security of the continent, though much to be wished, was not with them the most urgent, or the most important object. But, in considering the consequences of the first consul of France having assumed the presidency of the Italian republic, it was material to distinguish between the direct and indirect disposal of the resources of that republic. That he indirectly influenced the resources of the Cisalpine republic previous to the signing of the preliminaries, nobody will deny; and that since his accession to the presidency of the Italian republic, those resources are at his more direct disposal, may be also acknowledged. But as that influence more immediately affects other countries, and as we were anxious to provide for the security of our own, was this change in the influence of France over Italy a sufficient cause for a renewal of the war on our part? I cannot think so. Indeed, the cession of Louisiana appears to me of more importance. In that we are more vitally concerned, because it may more materially affect our colonial interests. But is the chance of its affecting those interests, dear as they justly should be to us, a justifiable ground for relinquishing the hopes of peace? Surely not. As to what the hon. baronet asserted, that this cession was a breach of the treaty of Utrecht, surely in that assertion he did not evince his usual accuracy of research; for Louisiana was not then considered as one of the possessions of Spain that should not be yielded to France; neither was it guaranteed by that treaty. It passed to France from Spain by a secret article of the treaty of 1763. That was looked upon as a proud peace; yet the present treaty

Digitized by Google

was, in some points, more advantageous; for by it we possess a leading and commanding station in Trinidad, which we did not possess before. But it is asked, how far will the spirit of encroachment, which actuates France, be permitted to advance? That spirit it is no doubt our duty and interest to watch. But I am bold to say, that it is peculiarly incumbent upon us, under our present circumstances, to prove, that it is our sincere wish to embrace a system of peace, as far as that system is compatible with our safety. That proof we have given by acquiescing in the alterations that have taken place in the relative situation of the two countries since the signing of the preliminaries; and, unless France now begins to act in a different spirit from that which prompted these alterations, neither the maritime nor the continental peace that now prevails can be of any long continuance. But it was the prerogative of his majesty to make war and peace; and how ministers would act in advising the former, depended on their discretion. If future encroachments were attempted by France, no doubt the House would be prepared to pledge themselves in support of administration, and both parliament and the country would cordially combine in arresting the progress of such a spirit, that must prove both dangerous to our own security, and subversive of the independence of Europe.—There were two other topics on which I must now beg leave briefly to touch; the one was Malta. By the preliminaries it was stipulated, that that island should be made independent of the contracting parties, and it was expected that Russia would have garrisoned it; but this, it seems, Russia declined. As a military station, Malta was undoubtedly of great value, especially as it favoured an attack upon Egypt. In this view it was more important than its bearings on Italy or on our commerce. But when Russia refused to garrison it, what better arrangement could have been made than that which the treaty has adopted? That it was not in a perfect state of security I am not prepared to deny; but if adequate funds were provided to support a garrison, its situation would by no means be precarious. The conduct which its inhabitants had displayed on very trying occasions, gave a fair promise that they would again act with the same spirit for their defence. The funds indeed formed an important question; and I am happy to have found a statement of the revenues of the island, which I am led to think authentic, and which represents them in a more favourable light than they had hitherto been represented. This statement makes the revenues amount to 130,000*l*. Since that calculation was made, a new source of revenue has been opened by the establishment of new langues in other countries, particularly the Russian and Bavarian langues. So that, taking the old and new revenues together, they will now amount to about 300,000*l*. exclusive of the commercial revenues of the island at the disposal of the grand master. Besides, an improved regulation has lately been adopted in the customs, which promises a great increase in the revenue; and on every view of what may improve or increase its revenues, they may be expected to amount to as large a sum as they stood at previous to the war. Add to this an accumulated surplus left by the late emperor of Russia, and which will now be converted to the better re-establishment of the order. So much for the revenues of Malta.—The grand object that we had in view, Sir, in that contest, in which for nine years we were engaged, was the attainment of general security; and to see how far we have succeeded, I cannot do better than to refer to the three leading points on which this security was to be founded. It was by the abolition of Jacobin principles, by the enemy being placed in that situation in which they could no longer hope, with the same prospect of success, to press them against this country, or by such an alteration in their application that they could not excite any feeling of formidable danger. Sir, will any man now say that the danger from French principles exists to the same extent as at the commencement of the war? Whatever opinions may be entertained of the nature of the present government of France, it cannot be denied, that no particular spirit of malignity is now shown to this country. We hear no more of those wild schemes of subverting our independence as a nation, which former governments of France were so forward to avow. The French now look to this country as a country enjoying the advantages of liberty, and as possessing a constitution which is worthy of being considered as the model of a free government. They feel for us all that deference and respect which it was usual to entertain under their ancient government. With

Digitized by Google

reference to the second ground of security, I contend, that even supposing the French principles to exist in their full force, it is impossible to entertain the same hope of establishing them in this country. At the time the war broke out, their principles were not understood; they were apt to mislead, from their novelty; they had not produced in France those miseries and crimes which have now rendered them the just objects of universal execration. Now, their real character and tendency are notorious to the world; the people of this country have for nine years had an opportunity of contemplating the enormities to which they have given birth, and to turn from the view of such disasters to the blessings of a free constitution. It would, therefore, Sir, be impossible now, if these principles still remained, to propagate them with any prospect of success.—The third ground of security arises partly out of the two preceding circumstances. The best test of the extinction of these principles would undoubtedly have been the re-establishment of monarchy in France; and hence, in conducting the war, we looked to this as a most desirable object, so long as any chance of its being obtained continued. I never said, however, and I am equally confident my right hon. friend near me (Mr. Pitt) never said, that security could not be obtained in any other way. We sought security by pursuing this object as long as the circumstances of Europe afforded any prospect of success; and, though in this object we have failed, I maintain that, as far as our separate security is concerned, it has been fully accomplished by the conduct of the war. For, though the territorial acquisitions of France cannot be viewed without regret, I concur with my noble friend, that so far as our separate security is concerned, this extension of territory is a circumstance which ought not to excite any degree of immediate alarm. I concur no less with him in thinking, that, relative to France, we are now in a greater state of security than in any former period of our history. I am indeed ready to say, that the influence which France has acquired, is for the continent highly disastrous, and that the state in which the balance of power is left in the general system of Europe, is extremely unsatisfactory. France, if she chooses to neglect the internal improvement of her territories, may undoubtedly carry desolation over the continent to a degree still more extensive. Whether she will, for the purpose of gratifying an inordinate lust of dominion, incur the imputation of leaving her own people the prey of barbarism, we have yet to discover; but at present the extension of her territories, as far as the safety of this country is involved, excites in my mind no degree of apprehension. That, by the cultivation of the arts of peace, by the introduction of habits of industry into the territories she has acquired, she may hereafter make very important advantages from her conquests, I do not deny. Nor do I mean to assert, that with regard to the security of this country these acquisitions may not, at some future time, acquire vast importance; but I do contend, that, as far as immediate security is concerned, as far as our interests are at present liable to be affected, they ought not to give rise to alarm. The dangers which may flow from them are not the dangers of the present moment; they can only be the dangers of a remote period, a period by far too remote to be calculated upon when judging of the effects of the present peace. I am, indeed, surprised at the unworthy timidity expressed by my hon. friends on the other side. When I make use of this expression I am far from meaning to insinuate that they are conscious of any such dishonourable feeling; but I cannot help saying, that the fears which they have expressed can serve no other purpose but to lower the tone and temper of the people of this country, and to elevate the tone and temper of our late enemy. On this part of the subject, I beg leave shortly to take notice of the change which has taken place in the situation of the country, in consequence of the war. The noble lord below, in the former part of this debate, stated this alteration with such ability, that I shall at present content myself with recalling the circumstances which he enumerated, to the recollection of the House. No one more sincerely laments than I do the loss of our influence on the continent; but if I were called upon to say what would have the greatest effect in restoring our influence on the continent; I would say, that it would be the giving back to France her colonial possessions. Let her commerce be revived—let her colonies be cultivated, and our interests will proportionably increase. Now, let us see what is the comparative state of the imports and exports of the two countries. During the war our imports have increased from 19 to 30

Digitized by Google

millions, and in the same period our exports have been augmented from 24 to no less than 43 millions; our articles of British manufacture exported have risen from 18 to 24 millions, and our tonnage from 1,600,000 to 2,100,000; our mercantile seamen have increased from 118,000 to 143,000: and when it is considered, that, during a considerable period of the war, 120,000 sailors have been employed in our navy, this accession of numbers cannot be considered without astonishment and admiration, nor fail to exhibit the most satisfactory evidence of the flourishing state of our maritime resources. Such a view of the commerce of the country, at the conclusion of a war the most expensive in which this country was ever engaged, surely affords no room for indulging any apprehension for its future prosperity. It is besides, Sir, to be considered, that during the war a considerable part of the carrying trade was in the hands of neutrals, and that it will now naturally return to its ancient channels of British conveyance. When I take these circumstances into consideration, I am astonished at the apprehensions which my hon. friends have expressed. How, on the other hand, Sir, does France now stand in point of commercial resources? In 1777, the latest period to which any regular account can be obtained previous to the war, the French exports were 12,000,000*l.*, and their imports about 9,000,000*l.* In the interval they had certainly increased; but, allowing for this increase, they will not differ materially from this statement. From the West Indies their imports were about 7,500,000*l.* and their exports about 2,500,000*l.* at the same period. By the report of last year the imports from the colonies did not exceed in value 61,000*l.* and the imports were not more than 41,000*l.* Suppose, then, that at the commencement of a commercial rivalship betwixt the two nations, the exports of France should be 7,000,000*l.* and their imports 8,000,000*l.* while our exports amounted to 43,000,000*l.*, and our imports to 23,000,000*l.* was there any reasonable ground of apprehension about the result of such a commercial contest? Yet, Sir, by a strange inconsistency, when such is the relative situation of the two countries, we are told that our commercial greatness is on the eve of being eclipsed, that our prosperity and our wealth are on the brink of destruction. Before we give way to such groundless apprehensions, before we cherish such desponding fears, it would at least be becoming to estimate the means that we enjoy of increasing that wealth which we have acquired. We ought to calculate the effect of a capital more than adequate to the territories on which it is to be employed, before we ascribe so much to the acquisition of territories, for the improvement of which, as in the case of the territories of France, capital is wanting. So far then, Sir, I see no room for apprehension, and I think there is as little to be reasonably dreaded from any prohibitions imposed on the introduction of our manufactures into France, or into the countries of her allies. How it can be the interest of a poor country to purchase dear articles instead of those that are cheaper, I am altogether at a loss to discover; yet such would be the policy of France in excluding our manufactures from her ports. But, even allowing that France by this exclusion should act against all the plainest dictates of common sense, how can we imagine that she will be able to persuade the powers under her influence to consent to such prohibitions? Is it at all probable that they will choose to buy articles at a much dearer rate, when English manufactures are in their power at a lower price, and of superior quality? It is not easy to suppose that they will consent to a prohibition so obviously disadvantageous. —But, Sir, let us briefly turn our attention to the state of Europe, and see how far this influence of the French can possibly be exerted. We have already seen the experiment tried, and we have seen its futility demonstrated. We have seen the trial made in a year of war, when every effort was used to ensure its success, and under circumstances far more favourable to such success than any which can exist in a period of peace. In the year 1800, a year the most favourable for the exclusion of articles of British manufacture, our exports to the continent were to the value of 7,500,000*l.* Having stated what this amount was at a time when the prohibition against our goods was more general than at any former period, I beg leave now to turn the attention of the House to the countries which are not under French influence, and to which, consequently the prohibition will not extend. They are Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Prussia, Poland, and Germany. To these countries the exports amounted to 6,000,000*l.* in the year I have stated.

Digitized by Google

Now, what are the countries in which the influence of France is so powerful as to procure an exclusion of our manufactures? They are Holland, Spain, Portugal, and the states of Italy. As to Portugal, I see no reason to believe that during peace the French will insist on excluding our manufactures. The prohibition only extended to the continuance of the war; and the stipulation at the conclusion of peace is, that France shall be allowed to trade with Portugal on the footing of the most favoured nations. This is all that I should ask for British commerce and British manufactures. Let a fair competition once be established, and I have no fear about the result. The greater part of Italy I allow to be under French influence; but with Venice in the hands of the emperor at the one extremity, and Naples at the other, I see little reason to dread the consequences of any prohibition which the French may attempt to establish. In stating that to these countries during the year I have mentioned our exports amounted to 1,300,000*l.* all that remained was only 200,000*l.* out of the value of the whole exports. We have already, therefore, seen the worst of the effects of such prohibitions during the continuance of the late contest; it is contrary to any principle of reason to suppose, that we can experience worse effects during a peace, and therefore we have no reasonable ground of apprehension. If we look to America, we see the fairest prospect for the continuance of our commercial relations; and if we look to the West Indies, there is quite as little room for gloomy apprehensions. It may be said, indeed, that several important colonies are now to be restored to the enemy, and that our trade will materially suffer by this restoration. This is, in my opinion, a groundless apprehension. If we look at the extent of British produce sent to all these islands, we shall find that it did not exceed in annual value 800,000*l.*; an amount surely, when contrasted with the great aggregate of our exports, of very inconsiderable importance. But I deny that a loss even to this amount, will be sustained. France cannot, in the present state of her manufactures, supply the demands of her colonies. She will be compelled to resort to the British market to obtain the necessary supply. We find that this is nothing singular in the history of this country. For a considerable time after the peace of 1763, the restored possessions of the French were supplied with articles of British produce; the same thing took place at the peace of 1783; and it is surely much more likely that it should take place under the present circumstances of France and her manufactures. When we look to the state of the French colonies which are now in their possession, we see still less room for apprehension. On the situation of St. Domingo, I have only a few observations to offer; and it is the less necessary for me to enlarge, as I see an hon. general opposite (Maitland) who can give much more accurate information on the subject than any to which I can pretend. I say then, Sir, that, if France succeeds in restoring industry to this important colony, and this they could only do by importation (according to the most moderate calculations, about one-half, or nearly 300,000 of the blacks have perished since the commencement of the first disorders in the island); taking the number of negroes wanted to be 300,000, and the price of each man to be 60*l.*, no less a sum than 18,000,000*l.* will be necessary to provide for the island the number necessary to fill up the place of those who have perished in the civil contests, or openly in the field. Can we suppose that, under the present circumstances of France, she should soon possess such a redundancy of capital as to enable her to make the purchase, without which the island is without value; far less to put it on that footing which would render it as valuable as it was prior to the first insurrections which took place? The question of the probable success of the French, or of the difficulties they may experience in restoring tranquillity to the island, is one involving so many different considerations, that I am unwilling to enter upon it. I will only remark, that the establishment of an independent black government, is what I could not contemplate without dismay. The dangerous effects of such an establishment on the tranquillity of the negroes in our own islands, are sufficiently obvious; and I leave it for the consideration of the House, that with such an establishment, France might avail herself of the breaking out of the first war to annoy our islands.—His lordship concluded by expressing his conviction, that we had come out of the combat in a situation which would enable us to meet any danger that might threaten our independence or our honour. The exertions we had already made had enabled us to sit

Digitized by Google

down in peace, if the world would allow us to continue so; and, under the circumstances in which we found ourselves placed, he thought it well to discontinue the contest, since we could discontinue it in perfect consistency with our safety. He trusted that a vigorous establishment would be preserved, and that we should be ready to stand forth in any contest which might be necessary for the maintenance of our rights, our independence, or our honour.

General *Maitland* said, he rose for the purpose of making some remarks upon the speech of the hon. baronet. In these remarks, he should indulge in no theoretical opinions of his own, but should merely offer some practical knowledge, and some information derived from experience and observation. The worthy baronet, in treating of the subject, had confined his observations principally to the West Indies; to the possession of St. Domingo by France, and to the cession of Louisiana. With respect to the boundaries stipulated in America, he could not conceive that much danger would arise from the fixing the boundary of the Arawari. Before the war the French had pushed their settlements as far as the Arawari. With respect to the course and position of that river, different opinions had been given by different gentlemen. For his own part he had no more means of ascertaining than those which were possessed in common by every other person. But the answer to the observations that had been made was obvious. What were the boundaries? He founded his opinion upon that of the two countries the most interested upon the occasion. We knew that France had conceived the boundary that she desired, to be of such importance as to carry on the war against Portugal for the purpose of obtaining it. We knew too, that Portugal conceived also the boundary to be of such moment that she resisted it as long as she was able. When, therefore, we saw the importance which these two powers attached to it, was he to be told that they knew nothing of their own interests, and that we were better acquainted with them than they were? He came now to the effect of the boundary of the Arawari, which was coupled with the cession of Louisiana. Of Louisiana he had heard much; he had heard that it would enable France to attack the United States on one side, and that she would be able to penetrate to Mexico on the other. This, however, was not the first time that strange doctrines had been maintained respecting Louisiana. Similar ones had been held at an early period of the last century, and upon them was founded the famous Mississippi scheme, and the consequent Mississippi bubble. When Louisiana was formerly in the possession of France, it was totally imbecile. During the time it had belonged to Spain, it had not advanced to greater maturity. In 1795, its population had not increased at all since the time it had been ceded by France. But it was contended, that the possession of Louisiana would give the French great influence eventually in the councils of North America. There was one observation that would apply here. We possessed Canada; yet the possession of that settlement did not enable us to affect the United States. If that were the case, how much stronger would the arguments apply to the case of Louisiana. If the standard of France were set up in Louisiana and the standard of the United States were set up in North America; he should, he confessed, have no fear of the result. With repect to Mexico, he saw no cause for those apprehensions which seemed to have produced such an effect upon the minds of some gentlemen. He proceeded now to the general question of the colonies. When gentlemen talked of what France could do with her colonies, did they never recollect there was such a thing as the British navy! Did it never enter into their minds, that she must send fleets and armies to those colonies to render them powerful, and that if she did, she must have passes from the lords commissioners of his majesty's admiralty? The whole argument upon this part of the subject seemed to him to be a most curious one. It was asked, did a great military power refrain from acting upon military principles? True; but how did this assertion apply to the colonies? To do us injury, it was not sufficient that France should be a great military republic; she must be also a great naval republic.—He wished now to say a few words with respect to St. Domingo. He had been a good deal surprised at the language which had been held by a right hon. gentleman last night; but much more was he astonished at the language used this evening by the hon. baronet. The noble lord who had just spoken had contended, that what Great Britain had obtained by the war was, security. Yet though by the war we

Digitized by Google

got rid of the revolutionary spirit in ope, we had not attained that end to colonies by the war. We had, how-, got a better chance of producing that t by the peace, than we could have had ny other means. The noble lord had led to the case of a free republic, or e should call it with more justice, a anarchy of blacks, being established in Domingo. This would be the greatest that could happen to that island. If French did get the better of the exist- state of affairs in their West India ds, then it might be said, another of danger would arise. True, but would be of a legitimate kind, and against which we could apply precau- . The hon. baronet had adverted to langer of a large French army being tained in St. Domingo. That this not an important consideration he did mean to say; not that such an army l do any injury to our islands, but a large force would be kept in them, he result of the expedition to St. ingo was known. That expedition elieved would be effectual sooner some gentlemen imagined. Now, as East Indies; an hon. member had ed his observations principally to in; he should extend his to all the ments ceded; and giving that hon. er the advantage of those cessions, uld then maintain, that never were ssessions, or indeed any possessions, secure than ours were in the East at the present moment. Pondi- was formerly of great importance ly; but the annihilation of Tippoo's had entirely put an end to it. Co- as nearer to his territories, but that ent now was of little importance. on. member proceeded next to the sion of the cession of the Cape. Of ossession he was as far from under- g the consequence as any man. To ssion of such a place, he should ooked with a disapproving eye, had ir East India possessions been so as they were, and had not the an- ion of Tippoo's power and the pos- of Ceylon rendered our security secure. That Malta was of great ance, he was prepared to admit, but was not sufficiently so to justify us ying on the war solely upon that t. But it had been said, that our would not be able to go into the rranean for want of ports. Lord , however, found no difficulty; and though we had no port, he was enabled to beat and annihilate the whole French fleet. After that event, Malta fell into our hands, and an expedition was sent to Egypt. He here bestowed a warm eulogium upon general Abercromby, who, he contended, would, if Malta had been of that paramount importance which it was contended to be, have fitted out his force for the attack of Egypt from thence. But what did he do? He carried all his force to a Turkish port. In conclusion, he should only add, that the more he considered the whole of the treaty and the conduct of his majesty's ministers, the more did it appear to him that the peace was as honourable as could be made, and as likely to be permanent as any peace that had ever been concluded.

Earl *Temple* said, he should not now go over the whole of the subject, as its principle points had been so thoroughly discussed. The noble lord (Hawkesbury) had stated the peace to be insecure, and therefore he would vote for the address because he wished to make it secure. The noble lord (Castlereagh) had observed, that this country would not long remain at peace, if France still pursued that line of conduct which she had adopted between the preliminary and the definitive treaty; for this reason he voted for the address, because France had constantly shown the same spirit of aggrandizement. He must a little complain of the noble lord who had spoken last, and the other noble lord, with respect to the course of argument which they had adopted. They had asked, was it better to renew the war on account of the aggrandizement of France, or to make peace? But this was not the question. The question was, whether, with our successes and our resources, we were not entitled to more than his majesty's ministers had obtained? The question was, whether we should not have obtained a compensation for the advantages which France had in the meantime obtained? It had been said, that the definitive treaty agreed with the preliminary treaty, and therefore we were bound to agree with the amendment: he could not accede to this proposition, because the situation of Europe was not the same at the period of the definitive treaty, as it was at the period of the preliminary treaty. Would the noble lord contend, that our situation was the same after France had become possessed of the Italian republic, or that the basis of

Digitized by Google

the treaty was not changed? Under such circumstances his majesty's ministers ought to have obtained an adequate compensation from France for the increase of power to her which had taken place between the preliminary and the definitive treaty. What was the situation of France with relation to the rest of Europe? It had been truly stated to be unsatisfactory. With respect to Malta, they had been told, that it was placed in the hands of an independent power; it was necessary, however, before this assertion could be received, to prove that Naples, to whose hands it was entrusted, was an independent power; it was necessary to prove, that she was able to take care of her own interests, before those of others were entrusted to her. The noble lord who spoke last but one had given a statement of the trade of France, and had observed upon the impossibility of her rivalling us: but the statement of the noble lord did not relate to the present time, but to the period of the monarchy: the case, however, was very different now, when France had added to her resources and her means beyond all proportion, and when she possessed an extent of coast from Venice to the Texel. It had been stated, that Malta was of no use to us in a time of peace; it might be very true; but it was well known, that it would serve as a depot of provisions for the use of our troops, and that it would serve to protect us from the French expeditions, whilst it would also protect our blockade of Toulon. In viewing the merits of this treaty he would ask, had we obtained what had been so triumphantly asserted to be the object of the war, indemnity for the past and security for the future; which were the only grounds on which this country ought to make make peace? Had we obtained either of those objects? With respect to indemnity, were we to look for it in the advantages of Europe, with whom we had made a common cause? Were we to look for it in the indemnity given to our good allies? Let us look at the king of Sardinia, was he named at all in the treaty? With respect to the queen of Portugal, her integrity had been broken through; and so subservient was Portugal to France, that he believed our ambassador there had been sent home for instructions with respect to an insult which this country had received there. Had we left Naples independent? The isle of Elba would sufficiently testify to the contrary. Last, though not least, was the prince of Orange: if ever less indemnity was offered, if ever an insult was offered to any ally, it was to the prince of Orange: we allowed the revival of the old dispute relative to his title, and we had said that he should have indemnity; but we had not said when or how. If any evidence was wanting against the treaty, it was that of the noble mover of the amendment, who had declared the peace to be insecure: let them look even at that amendment, and they would find that it recommended the keeping up a war establishment in time of peace: in this point of view the peace was insecure. As to our trade, he should say very little upon it; but it was of importance to consider the means which France now possessed of extending her trade, and of shutting many of the ports of Europe against us. With respect to the Cape, he should say nothing, as the subject had been so ably discussed by a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Dundas) on a former evening. He could not help observing, however, that we had given up to the French every establishment connected with our East India possessions, where they might make, undisturbed, whatever arrangements they chose for the purpose of annoying our trade and attacking our power. It had been said, that his majesty's ministers had given up none of our rights; but how would they justify giving up the honour of our flag, which was the last privilege that ought to have been given up. He wished to ask, who wished for war, his majesty's ministers who preserved a sullen silence, and refused to explain any article of the treaty, or those who wished to settle those points by amicable negotiation?

The *Master of the Rolls* said, he did nor rise for the purpose of entering into the details of this question, but should merely confine himself to one or two of the most prominent points. He made this choice, first, because it was not easy to compress the whole into an argument of any reasonable length; and in the next place, because the principal articles of the treaty had been so sufficiently explained by those who had been concerned in this negotiation, as to render it impossible for him to say any thing new upon the subject. He should confine himself to two points. It had been said, that the definitive treaty ought not to have been concluded, notwithstanding the preliminary treaty, on account of the large accession

Digitized by Google

in the mean time made to the power of France, which the noble lord asserted had changed the face of Europe. He should not now enter into the peace in detail, because, if the peace was unjustifiable in its principle, it must necessarily be vitiated in its detail; nor could any argument be adduced in favour of the detail until the principle was justified. A great deal of ingenuity had been employed by his right hon. friend who opened the debate on the preceding evening, upon many of whose sentiments, perhaps, there might be little difference of opinion; but he was at a loss to discover how the arguments of his right hon. friend applied in the present case. It had been clearly shown, that France had made many acquisitions, and that she had materially increased her power; but the gentlemen on the other side had not shown what part of those acquisitions, or how much of that power, had been the consequence of the peace. It was to the events of the war that France was indebted for that increase of her power. Did those gentlemen mean to contend, that the war ought not to have been undertaken? He was persuaded, that, bad as was the condition of Europe at the present moment, it would have been much worse, had it not been for the war. It might be said, that there was not a necessity for making peace; it would, however, be recollected, that the dictates of prudence were a ground of necessity to a wise man; and certainly, if there existed no visible means of bettering the condition of a country in a state of war, every thing concurred to induce and to render it a matter of good policy, in that country, to conclude a peace. If his right hon. friend could have shown how a change could have been effected in the situation of Europe, he would have joined his humble efforts to rouse the country to a continuance of the contest. He would have consented in that case to give up all the chances which might have been expected from pursuing that line of conduct; but before they induced him to support a continuance of the war, they must point out to him some method of successfully effecting any good by continuing the war; for instance, while we had allies upon the continent, there was a chance that the balance of Europe might be restored: such was the period when we rejected the first overture of Buonaparté. We might then, perhaps, have obtained more by a treaty of peace; but we gave up whatever compensation we might have obtained, for the chance of gaining every thing. A treaty of peace, therefore, such as this, could not be consented to at that period, when there was the chance of getting more than by any treaty of peace. In alliance with the powers of the continent, we might attain the object that was sought for, but certainly we could not attain it ourselves. We could with the greatest certainty ascertain the utmost limits of our efforts, and we could know, that, at the end of three or four years, the effect of these efforts would be still the same. What could we have done to prevent France from gaining the great accession of power which she had acquired upon the continent, to have prevented her from obtaining an influence in the Italian republic, or from obtaining from Spain the cession of Louisiana? It might be said, that if we did not persevere in the war for the sake of Belgium and Holland, it was no reason why we should not renew the war for the purpose of endeavouring to prevent the influence of the first consul over the Italian republic. It might be said, that we might as well continue the war for one object as for another; but a country must draw a line for itself. It was not to be said, that a country was to continue a war for the purpose of preventing this or that particular object from being carried into execution, but to preclude a dishonourable peace. It was not that we were to fight for one object or another, but whether in either case it would have been of use, or on the other hand unavailing, to continue the contest. The question resolved itself into this: Whether the war could have been continued with any prospect of diminishing the resources or contracting the power of France? It had been said, that the treaty ought not to have been broken off, but that we should have insisted upon a compensation for the increased power of France; in this the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Grenville), and the noble lord who spoke last, had differed from the right hon. gentleman who had opened the discussion, who conceived that the treaty ought to have been broken off after the conduct which France had displayed in the Italian republic. With respect to compensation, was it to be taken out of the territories in our possession? He wished to know whether any islands that we possessed at the conclusion of the war would serve as a counterbalance to the power

Digitized by Google

which France had acquired on the continent of Europe? It was not the power attained by preserving those islands in our possession that rendered us capable of contending with France, so far as regarded her continental power, because it was not exactly of the same sort. France had acquired a power by which other powers were less safe, but which she had rendered safe by rounding her territories; but would the possession of the West India Islands have the same effect with respect to this country? So far from increasing the means of this country, it brought with it rather weakness than strength; it divided our means and our resources, and certainly the acquisition of those resources we should acquire afforded no new means of defence, nor any means of counterbalancing the advantages acquired by France in India. This was felt at the negotiation at Lisle, in which it was fully understood that the West-India Islands could be no counterbalance to the power of France. If we had possessed the means of counterbalancing the power of France by means of our West-India Islands, then it must follow that ministers were highly to blame in giving up those means; but it had not been proved that we possessed them. It was likewise to be recollected, that whilst we possessed no means of controlling France upon the continent, it was only by means of the West-India Islands, to which she would direct her attention, that we had any means of influencing her, through the medium of the trade which she would establish and carry on in those islands.—He had heard no definite proposition made as to the propriety or expediency of continuing the war; it seemed, according to the arguments of gentlemen on the other side, that we were to carry on the war merely for the purpose of taking the chance of whatever might occur; they did not state a probability of effecting a change in the state of Europe, but they were contented with a bare possibility. According to these arguments, we were to continue the war for the mere purpose of not being at peace. We were to go to war merely for the possibility of a change in the affairs of Europe; and if this did not happen soon, we might exhaust our resources before it did happen; and, supposing it did not happen in any reasonable time, we should be under the necessity of making peace upon terms much less honourable and advantageous to this country. There were gentlemen on the other side who thought it was right to make peace, but contended that the peace showed that we had completely failed in all the objects of the war. A failure on our part there had been none; the object of the war had always been stated to be, to provide for our safety; we had not failed; so far from it, we were then in that House, after escaping from the revolutionary furor to which almost every power which had come into contact with it, except ourselves, had fallen a victim. Here we were in the midst of our ancient constitutional rights. We had been engaged with Europe, in which we could only assist; but it was never imagined that we were to overcome the enemy by dint of our own strength. They all remembered the time when the dread of French principles was so great, that Mr. Burke said, it was better to be conquered by any other nation than to yield to the principles of France, who had voluntarily torn herself from the civilized world, from which it was evident they meant to keep no terms with society. Surely, then, it was a consolation that France had now shown a disposition to enter into the pale of society, into which she was proceeding as fast as circumstances would admit!—If Buonapartè had taken measures to extirpate Jacobinism, whatever might be his conduct on other occasions, he had certainly done a real service to mankind. The conduct of Buonapartè in this instance was certainly founded on good policy; as, if Jacobinism should be established in France, no other government could enjoy repose; and if Jacobinism should be established any where else, it was clear that no government could exist in France. If Buonapartè wished to extirpate Jacobinism, it was certainly sound policy, as, whilst it was suffered to exist there was no security for the existence of government there or any where else.—With respect to the cession of Louisiana to Spain, the value and importance of that cession had been only discovered within a few nights preceding; and he believed that the question had been over-looked before, not only by them but by their ancestors. It was formerly in the possession of France, when France was perfectly alive to her own interest; but she had not been able to draw from it those advantages which it was contended might be derived from it. Louisiana was ceded to them by the treaty

Digitized by Google

763. His right hon. friend had said, Spain would feel a rankling spite nst this country, for agreeing to the ion of Louisiana; but for this he could no reason; it was the voluntary cession pain. With respect to the danger ng from it, he could not perceive that ree of injury to this country which been pourtrayed. It was ceded to ace at the peace of 1763, and no dan- was then apprehended from that ces- , though the ministers of that day e fully competent to discover that dan- if it really existed. The only dan- likely to result from it that he could over, rose from bringing France in act with the united states of America. night happen, in the course of ages, some danger might result from this nexion, but it would not soon be so. had much doubt whether the treaty Utrecht, alluded to by the hon. baro- would have prevented the cession of isiana by Spain. All that that treaty ared was, that Spain should not cede of her territories to France; but, isiana having been ceded to France he treaty of 1763, it became a ques- whether the cession of it now again rance was a breach of that treaty.— h respect to the non-revival of trea- he was of opinion, that those gentle- who had brought forward arguments nst this omission in the definitive ty, had argued against themselves. y had brought forward claims on the of France, which they admitted were rly destitute of foundation. They assumed an injustice on the part of ace, and proved that former treaties ht to have been revived by the very e arguments which would render those ties absolutely nugatory; for, if ace disregarded treaties for the pur- e of reviving former claims, which had n settled by those treaties, then all ties with her would be useless. If this the character of the French govern- nt, we ought to be constantly at war n her, and publicly to state the reason t. Confidence begot confidence; and e entertained these opinions of France, should be acting in the same manner he French directory, who received y declaration of ours with a declara- on their side that they doubted our erity. It was certainly not fair to put the mouth of France claims and pre- ions which we ourselves reprobated and demned.—With respect to the general ground of the revival of former treaties, he was not disposed to admit the propriety of it; but he supposed that some motive which he had not been able to discover, had induced the renewal of former trea- ties in other negotiations. There were some instances at least in which, as in the present case, if former treaties were renewed, they would be renewed without an object to refer to. France had generally begun in former treaties with the renewal of the treaty of Westphalia, and proceeded forward from thence. It was asserted, that we had in this instance departed from the established law of na- tions; but respecting the practice, it was not so uniform as it seemed to be sup- posed. Treaties had been before made with France, in which no mention was made of former treaties; in the treaties of Ryswick and Utrecht, for instance, no mention was made of former treaties; yet Europe stood as before. There were several treaties between this country and France, which, if now renewed, would not only have no object to refer to, but would be absolutely contrary, in their operation, to the present situation of affairs. In adverting to the renewal of former treaties, it should have been stated for what purpose they ought to be renewed; for unless gentlemen could show him some benefit to be derived from that renewal, he could see no reason for it. One effect was stated to be the consequence of this omission, which was, that all treaties, not renewed, fell to the ground. There were some which he thought it was of little consequence whether they fell to the ground or not. For instance, if a cession was made, it became absolutely part of the dominion of the country to which it was ceded; it was of no consequence that the treaty was not renewed in the event of a war and a subsequent peace, as the territory ceded could not revert back to the party ceding. Thus, with respect to the Bay of Honduras, which had been alluded to, it was said to be doubtful; our right to cut logwood there was not done away by the non-renewal of former trea- ties. In the first place, however, it was not very clear that we derived our title to it from a treaty; and, in the next, we were in possession of the right of pro- perty at the commencement of the war, which we had retained, and still held at the conclusion of the war. The right of property, therefore, still remained in this country, and there could not be a clause

Digitized by Google

inserted in the treaty to give us that which we had never lost; we merely restored what we had taken possession of; what we had before possessed in our own right, must remain vested in the same manner, without any necessity for its being so stipulated by treaty. With respect to these treaties, the ground on which gentlemen contended was, that we were left in that quarter of the globe without security or safety against the claims which France might set up against us. It was a singular circumstance, if the treaty set aside all claims, that we should still be subject to them. We had got into a whimsical debate upon the subject. They all agreed that there was no doubt as to our rights; yet they were discussing among themselves whether France might not dispute those claims with us. It seemed we were to implore France to negociate with us on a subject, in respect of which we said there was no dispute. The offer ought to come from her. No, it was said, we must go to France and state to her certain claims which we requested her to give up; and it was perfectly natural to suppose that France, finding she had such claims, would demand a compensation for giving them up; this was a complete inversion of our situation; we were to ask her not to attempt what she had not attempted. The definitive treaty gave France nothing but the factories and possessions which she had at the commencement of the war. Under the treaty of 1783, she might claim, according to the provisions of that treaty, various rights with respect to trade, founded upon ancient documents: but we now gave her nothing but what we had taken from her during the war. He should like to know whether a question could be set up as to her claims of right of trade under that treaty. He should have thought that France, if she set up any claims, would do it under the convention of 1787, that being in his opinion the only plausible claim which she could make. By saying that we gave her factories, it was a question which might be started, whether we gave her those rights of trade which she formerly enjoyed, whether those rights were restored as they existed before the war, or whether France only received her possessions according to the letter of her treaty? But in all his reading, he had never met with the question which was now started, that France might pass by the commencement of the war, and mount up to any indeterminate period, for the purpose of establishing claims. He had never heard any such question arise out of a treaty; the single question was, whether she acquired only by the treaty, or received the privileges which she enjoyed at the commencement of the war? If the latter was to be the case, as gentlemen on the other side contended, and that a nation was to acquire that which she had not gained by conquest or concession, but merely because she was conquered, whilst the conqueror lost something, it was one of the most whimsical arguments he had ever heard adduced. If this doctrine of claims, which were not claimed, was to be set up, it would be necessary to bring all the exertions of imagination, and the superinduction of every probability into a negotiation, and to choose a person of the most lively fancy to assist every ambassador; he must retire to his closet, and invent and contrive every thing that his imagination could suggest, that might be made the subject of claim or dispute by the adversary, and then let all these be inserted in the treaty. He would not trespass any farther upon the House. He trusted that the peace would stand justified; and that whilst they should prove themselves fully capable of preserving its blessings, they would be ready, if war became unavoidable, to meet it with firmness and with energy.

Dr. *Laurence* said, it was with surprise and regret that he perceived how different the conclusions were which his right hon. friend who had just sat down drew from the same facts, to those which he inferred from them. His right hon. friend had, in concert with gentlemen of the same opinion as to the treaty, put the question, how far this or that particular island would be a justifiable cause of war, and how far any event which had occurred in the interval between the signing the preliminaries and the conclusion of the definitive treaty, would be a good ground for breaking off that negotiation. It was the custom to put this question on each of those islands on events separately, without considering the joint effects of the whole; and still more, whether ministers might not have concluded better terms? It was rather remarkable, that the negative of this latter question was uniformly assumed, without the least evidence being adduced to show that many of the disadvantages of the treaty arose, not so much from the want of skill and judgment in ministers, as from the pecu-

Digitized by Google

liar circumstances of the times. Gentlemen, in touching on the subject of Louisiana, seemed to keep aloof from any allusion to the Floridas, though they were also ceded to France, and were known to have many excellent ports and other important advantages. The noble lord on the treasury-bench had observed, that Louisiana was before in the hands of the French, and that it never was deemed of much consequence in value or produce; but the true reason of that was, that the French then turned their attention to Canada, and neglected the cultivation of Louisiana. If, however, the strength of France was such at present, that it would have been criminal in ministers to delay the definitive treaty, on account of this or that particular place, how far would that argument go; and how far was it likely to operate upon us, when the strength of France should be increased by the consolidation of their resources? The noble lord had observed, that during the negotiation of the peace of 1763, the French privately ceded to the Spaniards this settlement of Louisiana: but that case bore no analogy to the late clandestine proceeding; it was not known until after the treaty was ratified; and the reason of the surrender was very well known—it was given over to the Spaniards as a purchase for Minorca, which the French were to transfer to us.—The learned gentleman was quite dissatisfied with the arrangement respecting Malta; that island should have been a grand barrier against France; it should not have been neutral, but ought to be a naval station well fortified, and able to assist us in interrupting the progress of any fleet that France might send out to attempt a passage to our Indian possessions. France professed, five years ago, when she sent her first expedition to Egypt, that her principal object was to extinguish the system of its government and religion; as it was said, by the then governors of France, to be the centre of superstition and aristocracy; and they could now boast of having accomplished their object, for the new organization of the constitution of Malta left scarce a vestage of the venerable old system; it innovated upon all that time had consecrated; and the island itself, instead of being under one influence, was placed under a pic-nic guarantee; the whole of this plan being prepared and carried into effect without the consent, or, in a great degree, the knowledge, of the knights of the order.—He would not plead for the indiscriminate renewal of all our political and commercial treaties; but there were some which he thought it would have been wise to renew, and not to rely solely on the treaty before the House, in which nothing definitive was to be found, and yet it was to form the basis of the future system of Europe; the principles and practice of all former statesmen being totally rejected. The vessel of the state was to be thrown afloat on the ocean of politics and commerce, with no rudder but the very distinct and comprehensive treaty on the table. As to the commercial treaty of 1787, the noble lord last night stated, that this treaty was inconsistent with the Alien bill. If so, we were the aggressors in the war; but that assertion was directly in the teeth of the arguments employed by his right hon. friend behind him, when he proposed that law to the House before the war.—He contended, on the whole, that ministers gave up more for the hollow-armed truce which they had obtained, than they should have done had the war been unsuccessful throughout. Certainly it had been productive of much expense; so much indeed, that when gentlemen adverted with any pride to the amount of our exports and imports, it would be curious to inquire whether that amount was equal to the interest on the national debt created by the war. Among the faults of omission, he reckoned as extremely culpable, the state in which our merchants, who had settled in the ceded colonies, were left, as to the removal of their property. If that had been judiciously provided for, according to ancient custom, we should now, without augmenting the miseries of the slave trade, be enabled from those colonies to furnish a sufficient number of negroes to cultivate our newly-acquired island of Trinidad. These were the points to which the address referred; and surely a large and respectable body of the country was discontented with the loose conditions of the treaty. It would be a good opportunity of putting the sincerity of France to the test, by proposing some arrangement on those topics, before the restitutions should be made. It had been often said by the advocates of the peace, that it was called for by the public opinion—that the late ministers advised it, and that the country received it with joy; but he had no hesitation in stating it as his firm belief, that if a list of the concessions to

Digitized by Google

be made to the enemy had accompanied the first news of the peace, instead of being the subject of exultation, even with the common people, the peace would have been received with strong murmurs of discontent. The people of England required to be led;—they were influenced by the character of those above them; and that formed not the least part of their praise; they were capable of great exertion, and patient of suffering: they combined in their character the extremes of the good qualities of other nations: they were constant in their fortitude; loyal in their sentiments; and elevated in their spirit; they were above the idea of submitting to any peace that was dishonourable or disadvantageous, and had too much good sense to value one that was insecure. If, from the imprudent temerity in which this treaty had been concluded, and the loose terms in which it was drawn up, hostilities should soon recommence, the fault would not be in the circumstances of the period at which the negotiation commenced as asserted—not in the conduct of the predecessors of ministers, but in the ministers themselves, who entered upon the negotiation, and followed it up almost to a termination, without resorting to parliament for counsel in any step of their progress. The consequences would be attributable to them, should those apprehended arise from a peace which left so much open for discussion, constituting so many grounds of dispute and discord.

Mr. *Bond* said, he would not at that late hour enter at large into the subject now before them, which had been so ably treated on that side of the House, particularly by his noble friend last night, and on the present by his right hon. and learned friend, who had displayed every thing which ingenuity, learning, information, talents, and eloquence could furnish. Gentlemen on the other side had also displayed great ability; he would not say, whether they had, or had not, produced much effect, by the manner in which they treated the subject; he would not impute to his learned friend who had just spoken, nor to any other gentleman, any intention of making unfavourable impressions by the observations which they made; but certainly such was the tendency of their arguments; it was true indeed, they professed to have no intention to censure any body; but, notwithstanding their professions, it was impossible not to perceive that the effect of all their observations was to convey censure both upon the peace, and upon the ministers by whom it was negociated. He wished to know whether there was any fact by which it could be fairly concluded that better terms could have been obtained. If there was not, why should the treaty be disapproved of, or its authors be censured. It was true, that the treaty could not be declared to be perfect—no treaty was ever so: nothing could be easier than for speculative men to form expectations in their closets; but to bring them into active life and reality, was often impracticable. Such was the case in the present instance; innumerable difficulties must occur in the course of such a negotiation, many of which were incapable of explanation, from their very nature, but a bare reference to which would be sufficient for the common sense of that House.—He then proceeded to observe upon some of those difficulties; and said, that he was very far from intending to insinuate that the spirit of the people of this country was broken; but it must be admitted, that, from the circumstances of the war, they wished for peace; nor was it unnatural that they should do so. The great load of the national debt could not be forgotten; the pressure of scarcity which we had endured, in some instances bordering upon famine, were hardships which must have an effect upon the public; from the consideration of these things, it was the business of every good administration to enter into negotiation; not that he meant to allege that peace was a matter of absolute necessity, but it certainly was a matter of prudence. Ministers, in concluding peace, had, therefore, in his opinion, done every thing that prudence could dictate. That, however, was but half their work: the remaining part was, to preserve entire our resources; and to preserve as much as possible, by wise measures, the spirit of the people, in order that, if ever the evil hour should arrive, we should have the ability and disposition to oppose, with effect, the ambitious projects of our rival.

Mr. *Wynn* expressed himself dissatisfied with several parts of the treaty of peace, although he did not wish that the good faith of it should not be preserved. In his opinion, the House ought to adopt the address moved by his right hon. friend.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that in the exhausted state of the House, and, he

Digitized by Google

add, the exhausted state of the ques-
it would be unpardonable in him to
them for any considerable length of
but there were some points to which
t it his duty to offer a few words.
oncurred with his right hon. friend
iion, that the turn of the argument
gentlemen on the other side of the
e, amounted to this—that the defini-
reaty was such as ought to be ap-
d of. He concurred with his learned
, (Mr. Bond), whom, for the first
he had the happiness of hearing,
hom he hoped he should often hear,
he tendency of the arguments of
men on the other side went to cen-
he peace and those who advised
ijesty to enter into it. His right
riend, from whom the address pro-
l, he was free to acknowledge, had
his proposition from those genuine
ples, by which he had been influ-
during the whole of the contest in
we had been engaged. He thought
ceived, from the proposition of his
ion. friend, the same disposition
led him, some time ago, to declare
House, soon after the preliminaries
gned his disapprobation of the peace
her. That disapprobation he had
ed in terms almost unqualified. He
clared his opinion against the power
ce and the usurpations of that power;
he manner in which he made that de-
on, he must have censured the peace
a death-blow to the prosperity of this
. He was convinced that if his right
iend entertained the same senti-
those sentiments went the length
idering that any peace with the
government of France was inad-
. Before he knew the terms he
sidered the peace itself as a death-
the prosperity of this country.
d always been the opinion of his
m. friend upon the subject; and
vas his opinion still, was clear from
tion he had now made upon the

Other gentlemen, who con-
n the opinion that the peace was
as this country had a right to
did not concur, however, with
aying that peace ought not to be
any rate; but his right hon. friend
ys gone the full length of saying,
peace with France in its present
is inadmissible. He could not
ling, that if the principles of his
n. friend were adopted, they must
y lead to a speedy renewal of the
war. The question, however, now wes, not whether a definitive treaty ought not to be concluded, but whether, being concluded, it was or was not a proper measure? He could not help observing, however, that although gentlemen on the other side had not said that this subject ought to have been discussed by piece-meal, yet they certainly conducted themselves on that principle, and had objected to the treaty by piece-meal; but ministers had laid their claim to discuss the subject altogether, and that was, in his opinion, the wiser mode. He was ready to rest the defence of the measure upon what had already been said: he admitted that circumstances of a very important nature had taken place between the signing of the preliminary and the definitive treaty—points which required explanation; and that there were differences between the preliminary and definitive treaties, which it would be proper for him to explain. And yet, having made all these admissions, he did not hesitate to ask the House this question. Was it or was it not, under all the circumstances, a treaty which it was wise in his majesty's servants to advise his majesty to assent to? Having said this, there were two or three points which he should proceed to explain. On the subject of Louisiana, he should say no more than appeared to be necessary by way of answer to the danger which had been talked of by gentlemen on the other side. In 1762, both Canada and Louisiana, were in the possession of the French, when Great Britain had large possessions in America; and the possession of Louisiana and Canada was not enough to prevent Great Britain from being more than a match for France. Canada certainly being important, and Louisiana being now said to be so, they were nevertheless unable to make a stand against Great Britain. What was said to endanger us now, was the power of France in that quarter, but which was not equal to our own possessions and strength, and with the friendship, for this purpose, at least, of an independent, and now become a powerful and populous country, namely, the United States of America. But with respect to another point, namely, the hazard to which our commercial interests were exposed in this quarter, thus stood the fact; there was a difference stated to exist between Louisiana and Fort Hillsborough. There was not in Louisiana a single port wherein a ship of

Digitized by Google

the line could enter, and, in the other, a ship of the line could not anchor without taking out her guns. Nor was there any danger to our commerce in that quarter, from the cession of this place to France;—the improvement which had taken place in making copper-bottoms to our ships, and other circumstances, gave us other great advantages in that quarter, by enabling us to alter the course of our navigation, by going through the windward passage, instead of the gulf of Mexico, so that we should never be annoyed in that quarter by the French, in the manner in which the hon. gentleman had stated.—With respect to the difference between the definitive treaty and the preliminary articles, he would ask the House, whether, under all the circumstances, they were not satisfied that this definitive treaty was a fair execution of the preliminary articles? He admitted that they were not strictly the same; and indeed if they were, there would have been no occasion for preliminary articles. There were five articles in the definitive treaty modified from that of the preliminary articles; 1st, the article respecting prisoners; 2nd, that respecting Newfoundland; 3rd, Portugal; 4th, Malta; and, 5th, the Cape of Good Hope. Now, with regard to three of these articles, they were revived in the definitive treaty, and finally settled in a way that was advantageous—he meant those which related to the prisoners, Newfoundland, and Portugal; it was therefore only as to Malta and the Cape that any doubt could arise. Now, with respect to Portugal, he would not say that gentlemen had a wilful misconception on that subject; but he really knew not how they could state the objections they had stated so often, after the explanations which had been given to them. He averred again, that the treaty of Badajos was known to his majesty's ministers previous to the signing of the preliminary articles, and that communication took place between us and the court of Lisbon on the subject of the limits of Portuguese and French Guiana: we were given to understand the limits of Portuguese Guiana; and this created a determination in us to afford them every protection possible; there was an apprehension that they would not meet their danger as danger ought to be met; and might therefore be induced to accept of terms still more disadvantageous than those in the treaty of Badajos. What was the conduct of his majesty's ministers? From an understanding which gentlemen might comprehend without calling for particulars, it was stipulated on our part, that the treaty of Badajos should be in force only in a particular manner, as far as it related to the limits of Portuguese Guiana; and that a subsequent treaty entered into, or which might be entered into, fixing the limits more disadvantageously to Portugal, should be null and void, as far as these limits were concerned. The treaty of Badajos, in consequence of the dissatisfaction of the French, was not ratified; but the treaty of Madrid was ratified, in which the terms were much more disadvantageous to Portugal than those of the treaty of Badajos, as far as respected the limits of the Portuguese Guiana. The House would recollect the explanation of his noble friend upon that subject, by which it manifestly appeared that we had acted generously towards Portugal in this respect; and this was so far supported by the best evidence, that no objection was made to it on the part of the court of Lisbon.—On the subject of Malta, he would, after so much had been said already, say no more than that the noble lord (Temple) misconceived the thing, if he thought the accounts to which he referred described the whole of the order of Malta, in point of revenue; for it related only to that part of the revenue which grew out of the customs. It had been asked, whether the king of Naples acquiesced in this matter? To which he answered, that the acceptance of the king of Naples had been signified in this particular, and therefore all objection on that article was done away. Austria had also accepted the guarantee.—Having thus gone through all that appeared to him to be necessary to particularize, he would ask, whether this treaty was or was not, under all the circumstances, fit to be entertained by the House, and worthy of its support? He was not desiring that it should be praised. He had never thought of this treaty, nor of the preliminary articles, with any sentiment of exultation; he had satisfied himself, that it was that which, upon the whole, was the best measure that could be taken; he had never endeavoured to paint it in false colours; he had never attempted to apply to it any epithets of praise; he was content with the reflection that he had not tarnished the honour of the country by the measures he had adopted; he had long been of opinion, that there

Digitized by Google

was no extremity of distress which the nation would not rather suffer, than that its honour should be tarnished; for honour was another word for strength; but if he were asked, under such circumstances, and after an additional proof of the ambitious views of France, and of its power by the transaction of Lyons, if this country had abstained from making remonstrances, or from taking any step to signify to our adversary the feelings of his majesty on that occasion? he would answer, that gentlemen who argued a case like this had many advantages over a person in his situation. They could easily put questions to him which it was impossible for him to answer; and they might state obstacles which it was difficult, if not impossible, for a minister to remove in the way of argument. He would only say, that it was matter of great satisfaction with him and with the rest of his majesty's ministers, that they were determined, in the event of the failure of the negotiation, to have laid before the House every document which they possessed upon the subject. He thought, after this it would be tautology in him to say, that he was satisfied the honour of the country was not tarnished by any thing that had been done by his majesty's ministers in the course of this negotiation. But if the question was put to him, he would answer it, not by any particular statement, but relying on what had been said already by his friends, that an attempt on the part of Great Britain to maintain alone the contest with France until her territorial power in Europe was abridged considerably, was an unwise measure. That the extent of that territorial power was matter of regret, was unquestionable; but it was a lot which we had not the power of controlling. We ought to be contented with the conviction that we had abundant means of providing for our own security, in a separate state and condition; but we were not able, under all the circumstances by which the greater part of the world was affected, to provide for that security on a large scale which connected us with the security of other powers. That depended upon events over which we had no control. He could only say, he was astonished that his right hon. friend (Mr. Windham), whose heart, he was persuaded, was deeply interested in these things, and who even now cherished the hope, perhaps, of recovering all that had been lost in the contest, should not long ago have been satisfied with the arguments by which the expediency of making peace was demonstrable; and that even upon the very principle of his right hon. friend himself, which was this, that if ever Austria and Prussia and other powers should recover the power, and regain the inclination, of obtaining what they had lost in the contest, the only way to enable this country to give vigour and energy to such a principle was, to preserve our resources from waste; and that nothing was capable of doing so, in an effectual manner, but peace. He should rejoice to see the resources of this country economized, as he hoped they would be by peace. "God grant," said, Mr. Addington, "that peace may be preserved! It is my earnest prayer, that we may long enjoy the blessings of peace; and that France may not use her power in such a way as to compel us to arm against her; but if war should again take place in two or three years (and I hate to state the supposition), I would say, that it will even then be matter of great consolation to every man in this House that he has done every thing in his power to avert the calamity. I am well persuaded, that, whatever may happen, it is the wisest course for us to husband our resources at present that we may the better be prepared, if that should be our lot, to exert ourselves with energy and effect. Nothing is so likely to prevent a war, as the being prepared to meet it; nothing is so likely to keep other powers from molesting us, as the knowledge that we possess the means of vindicating our rights. I think, therefore, that we should take care not to exhaust our resources when there is nothing to be gained by it. Let it not be supposed, that because I say this, I am of opinion that our resources have been improvidently employed. I am so far from thinking so, that I believe the very means by which we have obtained peace have arisen from the vigour with which we prosecuted the war." Mr. Addington then proceeded to observe, that neither himself nor any of his colleagues had any plea of inadvertency for an excuse, if the definitive treaty was defective in its provisions. He should think it highly unworthy to urge such a plea if he had it; but there was no such plea, for they had been guided in drawing the treaty, and all the provisions of it, by lord Eldon, whose knowledge, diligence, talents, and other excellent qualities, were

Digitized by Google

too well known to render an enumeration of them necessary. The treaty, therefore, on our part, had all the advantages which belonged to consummate understanding, and the habits of professional accuracy in the construction of written instruments. He was thoroughly persuaded also, that in another branch of the negotiation he should be without excuse if the treaty was defective; for there never was a period when the business of the office in Downing-street was more ably conducted. He knew that some insinuations had gone forth upon the conduct of the negotiation. He knew there were some who had doubted the propriety of that selection; to whom he would say, that the able person here alluded to had not only conducted himself in a manner which conciliated affection, and attached personal respect, but had showed great wisdom, and exhibited a fresh claim to the affection and gratitude of the public. Gentlemen who had spoken against the treaty, had taken the parts of it which appeared to them to be objectionable, without touching those which they themselves beheld with satisfaction. They had forgotten that the preliminary articles were the result of the negotiation before the fate of Egypt was known, and, therefore, it had so much the more merit. He was not disposed to enter into a comparison of power, and the probable result of it, as between Great Britain and France; but it excited his astonishment that gentlemen, in discussing these topics, made no difference between the probable effect of power acquired by violence, and that which was the effect of virtuous exertion. Some gentlemen affected to say, that the people had altered their opinion on the subject of this peace. He believed that the speeches of gentlemen in that House had affected the inhabitants of the metropolis in some degree. He did not make it a matter of charge against these gentlemen; but this was certainly the effect of the manner in which they had treated this subject. He did not believe, however, that any effect was produced on the mass of the people; he believed they hailed the peace as a blessing. Some felt a pressure on account of taxes, and were impatient for the peace, under a delusion into which they had been led, that peace would immediately lessen the pressure of those taxes. Many things had been attributed to the war of which it was not the cause, and among these was the high price of provisions, of which the war was very slightly indeed, if at all, the cause. With these feelings (said Mr. Addington), I am convinced that the language held out by gentlemen in this House (from a sense of their duty, I have no doubt) may have an effect, for a time, on the people, to disincline them to the peace, and may have an effect on the continuance of it, unless counteracted. I should, however, be grieved if that were the effect of it. I am sure I speak the sentiments of every individual in his majesty's service, when I say, it is our earnest wish that the blessings of peace may be continued, and we wish to take every measure consistently with honour, and the safety of the country, to preserve these blessings, and I am impressed with a thorough conviction, notwithstanding what has been said, that the probabilities of the continuance of the peace now concluded, are not less than the probabilities of the continuance of the different pacifications which have taken place at various periods of the last century; I mean, if the country be disposed to make provision for its own security; without which peace cannot be lasting. We must not suppose that France is free from the disposition of taking advantage of our weakness, if we should appear at any time to be weak; but let us guard against weakness, and give ourselves that security which we have the means of giving. By this course, we shall at once inspire our friends with confidence, and discourage those who may incline to be our enemies. If advantage they can take, advantage they will take; but I know of nothing in circumstances of the present time; I know of nothing in the disposition of the government of France, nor in the disposition of the person at the head of the government of France, that warrants any apprehension that the peace now concluded may not be lasting. If this country be true itself, I think a just expectation may be entertained, that it will be lasting. This country is now in a state of acknowledged strength, and indisputable power. It is on an eminence; and may continue so, by a fixed determination to pursue a right course; which is, not to invade the rights of others, nor to suffer others to invade its own. By a system of conciliation and firmness, I am confident peace may be maintained, and the pre-eminence of this country preserved as high as it is at present. I can hardly wish it to be higher; but I trust it will

Digitized by Google

er be lower. It is the wish of my art, and it shall be my unremitting en- vour, to preserve, as far as I am able, happiness of this country, which now he admiration of surrounding nations. Mr. *Sheridan* said:—Sir, at this late r (about two o'clock) it is with ex- ne reluctance that I rise to trespass your time and patience. I shall not ingular to-night, in the professions I e you of avoiding details; but, in one ect, my conduct will differ from every r gentleman who has addressed you— ll keep my word. If I feel repugnance ise at so late an hour, I feel equally nge with respect to the unpopularity ch I fear I most experience. It is ural to every person to have pleasure oting in a majority, though to that sure I have long been a stranger. ong the strange things we are conti- ly witnessing, is, the strange division arties at present in this House. Sir, ve heard it said that there are about ve or thirteen different parties among nay, some carry the number much ier. Now, I scarcely expect a single with me beyond that little constitu- l party who have, for the last ten s, been the object of so much un- fied abuse; but those men who have ten been held up to public opprobrium he very same whose every prediction been fulfilled, and every fear realized. discussion of this necessary but dis- eful treaty of peace to-night, is a rmation of the propriety of their uct during the whole course of the

My friends must feel poignant e and deep humiliation at the situa- o which, by these terms, this coun- reduced, but which they have la- d steadily to avert. Those who op- this peace have been arraigned by st speaker as aiming at a censure on sue of the negotiations, and on the ters themselves; and certainly, Sir, object is, to condemn the peace, and t a slur on the abilities of his majes- ninisters. But, in this conduct of , they have at least the merit of consistent. I support the peace, se I feel confident that no better , considering all circumstances, could tained. Their predecessors had care of that. They had left them oice, but between an expensive, y, and fruitless war, and a perilous ollow peace. They have chosen st of the alternatives. Now, says the minister, they who oppose me, depress the country. I thank these new opposi- tionists for their manly firmness in coming forward, and opposing, upon their own principles, this degrading treaty. Let the people of this country be fully aware of all the circumstances of the peace. They have done their duty, then, in thus pub- licly discussing them. But a right hon. gentleman, not here this evening, an ex- minister, too, suspects something more. If he has not altered his opinion since yesterday, he suspects their motives. "They," says he, "disapprove the treaty, and attack administration, because they wish to drive out ministers, and succeed to their places, and for that purpose they have formed a confederacy." Truly, Sir, a heavy charge! But I must declare that they have never veiled their opinions. Some of them especially have been at all times very open; and I conceive that it would be high injustice to suspect them, upon slight grounds, of a dirty cabal to turn out the present ministers.—Says the right hon. gentleman, "upon their prin- ciples, they would never have made peace." Why, so we have always said. It is now therefore confirmed, that a leading part of the late ministry acted upon such principles. But as the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Dundas) yesterday denounced their foul ambition, and their design to trip up the heels of their suc- cessors, another great discovery is now made—these persons principles were such as rendered a peace impossible, and yet the very men who say so have just been thanking them all, as the saviours of the country! Can the right hon. gentleman account for this inconsistency? I should think not; and yet he looks so confidently, that I almost think he could. He thought I was cheering him, as if I did not sup- pose him a constant supporter of the war; and he assures the House "he was a steady friend to it!" But he has now found out that it was necessary to stop. Pray, why not have stopped a little sooner? why not before you were so much ex- hausted? for instance, when Bounaparte made you an offer? Now, however, he finds the necessity of peace. But is this such a peace as will give us real repose? Consider your debt and taxes, and the necessity which seems to be at length coming upon you of keeping up a peace establishment unknown in this country. It is lamentable to see you all split into miserable parties, when your great enemy

Digitized by Google

is uniting every possible means of extending his power. You are squabbling about the measuring of ribbons and tapes, and the paltry revenues of Malta, when much greater objects are before you. The events of every day seem to call more and more for the expression of a public feeling, that the time will come when French encroachments and oppression must cease, and when the voice of this country must be clearly raised against their atrocities and tyrannical conduct. The right hon. gentleman says, "we have preserved our honour!" Honour depends more on the manner of doing a thing than on the thing itself. We had a great armament at the time of negotiation, but I do not hear that it carried any point whatever. "This," says he, "is a peace in which we relinquish nothing, and gain much!" Will any man of common sense undertake to prove that? I defy him to name the single object, ever-varying, ever-shifting, unrelinquished. What did we go to war for? Why, to prevent French aggrandizement. Have we done that? No. Then we were to rescue Holland! Is that accomplished or relinquished? No. Brabant was a *sine qua non!* Is it gained? No. Then come security and indemnity! Are they obtained? No. The late minister told us, that the example of a Jacobin government in Europe, founded on the ruins of the holy altar, and the tomb of a martyred monarch, was a spectacle so dreadful and infectious to Christendom, that we could never be safe while it existed, and could do nothing short of our very last effort for its destruction. Now, Sir, let us see what we have laid out for all these fine words, which at last gave way to "security" and "indemnity?" Why, near 200,000 lives, and 300 millions of money! And we have got Ceylon and Trinidad! I should propose, that as we have given to our heroes titles from the places where their laurels were won, our St. Vincents, Nelsons of the Nile, &c. so we should name Ceylon, Security island; and call Trinidad, the island of Indemnity! Now, if we look at the state of Europe, we find that the noble lord opposite has a most curious and convenient epithet, which he applies to what is rather a disagreeable object to him (lord Hawkesbury). He talks of its being in an "uncomfortable"—Was it? Oh, no! "unsatisfactory state." Germany, Holland, Italy, they are all in an "unsatisfactory state;" and so, I suppose, is Switzerland, which now seems likely to undergo a division among her powerful and generous neighbours. That innocent and virtuous suffering country is now, I suppose, in an "unsatisfactory state!" But great Britain is all this time far from langour. She is in a "satisfactory state!" However, a grave and learned master of the rolls, tells us, for our comfort, that, notwithstanding all that has happened, here we are debating and doing business, in all the old forms and customs of the House. Pray, now, could not this have happened, supposing we had never gone to war? I think he should have made that out before he congratulated us so warmly upon our present debate under all the "old forms of the House!" The minister, too, goes on acceding to old forms; he has his majorities according to custom. Prussia can go on too in its old forms! Is this armed repose, this hollow peace, then, the fruit of our long and glorious war?—A great deal, too, has been said to be gained by the disposition of France to lay aside Jacobinism. But the grand consolation of all is in looking to Buonaparté as the extirpator of Jacobinism! A learned gentleman, however, states to this House, that it is the nature of Jacobinism, if driven from any country, always to look with pride and ambition to a settlement in the place where it had birth, and to fix itself there. So now this "Child and Champion of Jacobinism," as he was styled, is to become a parricide. The child of sin is to destroy his mother! As this Jacobinism is by the late minister stated to be a vice never to be eradicated from the bosom when it has once been implanted, all Europe will doubtless look to this great consul for its destruction. Indeed he seems very desirous of extending his care to his neighbours. Suppose you make him king of Europe at once—he will soon extirpate all the Jacobinism that infests it. My alarms begin when the alarms of some persons cease. The great question about the dangers of the French revolution were always upon the degree of the danger to be apprehended. Some danger was always allowed; but to suppose the people of this country so miserably infatuated as to fall in love with dirt, and blood, and guillotines, with all the atrocious deformities of the system of Robespiere; and that now—when France is "covered with glory," though certainly without liberty, or any thing that much resembles it—there should be nothing to

Digitized by Google

dazzle and captivate, is out of my comprehension. If there be in this country men of dangerous ambition, Buonaparté is the man to hold out to them, by his ambitious and successful conduct, an example much stronger than any thing that could attract the people in the exhibitions of riot and murder. But they say, he has "begged pardon of God and man" by his piety and penitence! Yes, the pious, prostrate Buonaparté, has begged pardon of God, for making a tool of the sovereign pontiff, by bringing back the prelates of the Gallican church, and constituting them, with the salaries of curates, spies, and informers. How has he begged pardon of man? By coming down on that honest, simple, hospitable people, the Swiss, and destroying the independence earned by the bravery of their ancestors. How has he acted to us? Why, by condescending to receive our humiliating submission of every thing we had acquired by the prowess of our army and navy! I must trust to our valour to defend us against his armies; and I pray Heaven to protect us against the effects of his penitence and piety!—I must confess, that nothing has been stated against this peace unaccompanied by proofs. I would rather have given to France Malta, and taken the Cape, than have made this absurd arrangement. If the late secretary for the war department were here—who is perhaps here [looking at Mr. Pitt] by proxy—he might have made a whimsical charge against the present ministers. He (Mr. Dundas) said, that "the minister who should give up the Cape would deserve to lose his head!" There sits the minister, however, with his head safe upon his shoulders. I have almost a mind to attack him on the authority of Mr. Dundas. Malta would have been a great acquisition to us; and therein I agree with the war secretary. It would have stood, with the British standard flying in the centre of the Mediterranean, "like a great seamark, saving those that eye it." Ministers say, the emperor of Russia would not take care of Malta. If they will tell me so upon their honour, I will believe them; otherwise, upon my honour, I won't believe any body that says so. That did not appear to be Paul's idea of it. Perhaps he was mad! There was, however, some method in his madness. But, Sir, there's a message which Buonaparté has sent to his tribunate concerning some Russian soldiers, who are to go and take good care of the republic of the Seven Islands: and they may probably be intended for Alexandria, and may be connected with some plan against Turkey. Sir, if any thing in the shape of a statesman will say in this House, that he looks at that power, "at which the world turns pale," without apprehension, as the minister seems to tell us to-night, I must say he has a prodigious stock of courage; but I cannot give him credit for wisdom as a statesman. But he has found an excellent reason for not being afraid of Buonaparté. He says, colonies will give him commerce, and that the enjoyment of trade and wealth will divert his mind from war, and be a pledge of future peace. Sir, I do not know what France will be; but I do know that she is now a hard, iron republic. Buonaparté, from his military education, and the sort of company he has kept, they allow, is as yet a little rough; but then, if we could only catch him and clap him behind the counter, he will become perfectly civil and quiet. Sir, when I was reading the treaty, I thought all the foreign places, Pondicherry, Chandernagore, Cochin, Martinico, &c. were all cessions. Not they; they are all so many traps and holes to catch this silly fellow in, and make a merchant of him! I really think the best way upon such a principle would be this: let the merchants of London open a public subscription, and set Buonaparté up at once! I hear a great deal respecting a certain statue about to be erected to the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt) now in my eye, at a great expense. Send all that money over to the first consul, and give him what you talk of so much—capital to begin trade with. I hope the right hon. gentleman over the way will, like the first consul, refuse a statue for the present, and postpone it to posterity. There is no harm, however, in marking out the place. The right hon. gentleman is musing, perhaps, what square, or place, he will choose for its erection. I recommend the Bank of England. Now for the material. Not gold: no, no! he has not left enough of it. I should, however, propose papier maché and old Bank notes. Ministers recommend us to make France commercial for the sake of peaceful habits, and then tell us how impossible it is for her to increase in trade and commerce for want of the necessary credit and capital: There my prospect was damped!—I was going now to India; but I remember I promised

Digitized by Google

to avoid detail: I must keep my word. There was some Northern logic here last night—something specious—a kind of northern lights—pretty enough to look at, but not very useful, about our possessions having a better security in India without, than with, our enemy's recognition of our rights. This, I confess, I cannot understand. The right hon. gentleman asks, whether they would have been justified in breaking off the treaty? That is a question between him and those who like the preliminaries; but it is otherwise with those who like neither. The secretary at war (Mr. Yorke) has said, Buonaparté will look at us with a "soldier's eye." I think he will with that of a statesman! Now the city militia, and some other corps, are disbanded, it is not exactly a spectacle for a soldier's eye. One cannot walk along the streets without hearing doubts expressed of the nature and security of the peace! And the next great inquiry is, "Pray, who is minister now? Is there, then, an interior and an exterior prime minister?—one who appears to the world, and another secret, irresponsible directing minister?" Certainly, in many respects I have given my testimony in behalf of the present ministers. In nothing more than for making the best peace, perhaps, that they could, after their predecessors had left them in such a deplorable situation. But the present ministers continue to identify themselves with the former. They have ministerially supported a refusal to inquire into the state of the country, just as they were about to take the government; they have passed an indemnity bill, and since that a security bill, in a resolution of thanks, and these are the only indemnity and security acquired!—The ex-ministers are quite separate and distinct, and yet they and the new ministers are all "honourable friends!" What is the meaning of this mysterious connexion? Why does not the minister defend his peace on the only good grounds of defence? Does he hold that situation only to make peace, and leave it for his predecessor? Do they bargain for support, on one side of talent, and on the other of power? No minister of this country ever condescended to act under such an incomprehensible connexion, and to receive such equivocal support. Part of the case is clear. If the late minister attacked the treaty, the present would turn round and say—"You brought me into a situation of necessity—you compelled me to sign a disgraceful treaty—you had been arrogant, and I have put up with indignity—Buonaparté by his minister Otto, would laugh at me!—This work is yours—you placed us in this sad dilemma. The minister takes no strong ground of defence: I will not say he dares not take it. There he sits to receive the attack of the new confederacy, who are not great in numbers, but in talents. The ex-minister is mounted on a kind of hillfort to fire down on the assailants; but the garrison is all manned with deserters from the principles of the war. I should like to support the present minister on fair ground; but what is he? A sort of outside passenger; or rather a man leading the horses round a corner, while reins and whip, and all, are in the hands of the coachman on the box! [Looking at Mr. P.'s elevated seat three or four benches above that of the treasury]. Why not have an union of the two ministers, or at least, some intelligible connexion? When the ex-minister quitted office, almost all the subordinates kept their places. How was it that the whole family did not move together? Had he only one covered waggon to carry away friends and goods; or has he left directions behind him that they may know where to call? The only way in which I can solve this strange division of parts is this: Aristophanes, a Greek author whom a noble lord (Belgrave) will understand but whom I must translate for the benefit of the country gentlemen, tells a story somewhat in point: he says, that Nycias sat so long in one posture (perhaps as long as the ex-minister sat on the treasury bench), that he adhered to the seat; so that when Hercules came to snatch him away, in the sudden jirk a certain proportion of his sitting-part was left behind him [loud laughing]. The House can make the allusion. Sir, this is not a noble, manly kind of coalition between these gentlemen. Of the ex-minister I would just say, that no man admires his splendid talents more than I do. If ever there was a man fitted by nature to benefit his country, and to give it lustre, he is the man. He has too much good sense, taste, and talents, to set his mind upon ribbons, stars, titles, and other appendages and idols of rank: he is of a nature not at all suited to be the creature or tool of any court. [Mr. Pitt bowed repeatedly]. But while I

Digitized by Google

this say of him no more than I think his character and great talents deserve, I must tell him how grossly he has misapplied them in the politics of this country. I must tell him how he has augmented our national debt, and of the lives lost in this war. I must tell him he has done more against the privileges of the people, increased more the power of the crown, and injured more the constitution of his country, than any minister that I can mention. Respecting the resignation of the late ministry, I do not believe one word of what is said about Catholic emancipation. I could as soon believe that it was because they had discovered the longitude. If they did go out on that ground, they were certainly at liberty so to do. But after they quitted their situations they circulated a paper in Ireland, attributing the failure of an indispensable measure to resistance in a certain quarter (and that quarter was their sovereign), and directing the Irish Catholics to look to them for hope of relief. If this was short of high treason, how far short of it I cannot define. The non-performance of the promise had, I believe, withheld the hearts of the people of Ireland, and might be a reason for making the peace on the terms upon which it was concluded. I consider it fair to those who have entertained the sentiments that I do of the rise and progress of the war, to record the real grounds on which we approve of a peace, the terms of which are so inadequate and insecure. Supposing that Mr. Windham's motion will be rejected, I have framed mine in such a manner as to come as an amendment to lord Hawkesbury's; and, according to the precedent of the other, I make it in the shape of a resolution, by leaving out all the words of the address, but "That", and then proceed: "It is the opinion of this House, that the omission of various opportunities of negotiating a peace with advantage to this country, and more especially the rejection of the Overtures made by the Chief Consul of France in January 1800, appears to this House to have led to a state of affairs which rendered peace so necessary as to justify the important and painful sacrifices which his majesty has been advised to make for the attainment thereof."

Mr. *Tierney* briefly explained the reason why he could not, however desirous of giving a vote in favour of the peace, vote for the amendment which the noble lord had proposed. It contained certain expressions as to the dangerous designs of the enemy, that seemed to imply a justification of the war, which he had ever thought it his duty to oppose, as unnecessary, ruinous, and unjust. The credit of the country, too, was spoken of in terms which did not appear to him consistent with fact. Unless these words were expunged, he was determined to vote against the amendment, however reluctant he was to do any thing which at all looked like a disapprobation of the conduct of ministers in bringing to a successful termination the work of peace.

Mr. *Grey* thought ministers right in concluding the peace, but would not allow that the beneficial effects described in lord Hawkesbury's amendment were produced by the war, and therefore could not vote for it. It had been said, respecting the treaties of 1783 and 1787, that the former contained poison with regard to the safety of our Indian possessions. He was authorized by the noble marquis (Lansdowne) who concluded that treaty, to say, that he wished it were in his power to defend the treaty in that House; as he would then show that it did not contain the poison imputed to it, and that it was not improved by the treaty of 1787. Mr. Grey gave no opinion of his own, farther than that he thought the non-renewal of treaties left it open to the French to make claims, though they would be unjust.

Mr. *W. Smith* was sorry he could not vote for the amendment, though he approved of the minister's conduct in concluding the peace. It had been contended, that the original address was not a censure upon his majesty's present ministers; but it appeared to him not only a censure, but a very strong one.

Mr. *Hobhouse* was anxious to explain the grounds on which he should give his vote that night, as he differed materially from those hon. gentlemen, with whom he had been accustomed formerly to agree. The address moved by Mr. Windham did not recommend a violation of the definitive treaty, which had lately been concluded at Amiens. What then was its real object? Was it not to pass a vote of censure on ministers? Considered generally and practically, this was its object, and in that interpretation the right hon. gentleman himself had acquiesced. In what light, then, was the House to regard the amendment proposed by the noble lord?

Digitized by Google

It was no other than a motion to declare, that the House approved of the definitive treaty. In that general view it was surely entitled to the support of all those who justified the peace on any grounds, however different from each other. A nice criticism of the import of every word or sentence was unnecessary; it was sufficient to consider the general purport, both of the original address and the amendment. But he was prepared to go farther, and to assert that the words, which had been chosen by the noble lord need not rest upon this defence; for, if fairly examined, they would not admit of the construction put upon them by his hon. friends. Two phrases were deemed exceptionable. The first was, "The wild and destructive projects with which this country was threatened by France at the commencement of the war had been happily frustrated." The words were not—the wild and destructive projects on the part of France, which this country was threatened by which had occasioned the war. Had such terms been employed, those who did not consider France to be the aggressor could not subscribe to them. But here no reference was made to the causes of the war; it was only said that France, when the war was begun, meditated designs against this country of a wild and destructive nature, which had happily been frustrated. It was natural that France, when once she had drawn the sword, should endeavour to use it to the injury of her adversary; and that many of her hostile schemes had failed, no gentleman would deny. That war being once commenced, she meditated, and would gladly have effected a revolution in Great Britain, whether by intrigue, or force of arms, was past all doubt; and that such a plan had been frustrated was no less incontestible. He would also ask, whether, the invasion she had more than once projected, she had not been obliged to abandon? His hon. friend (Mr. Tierney) objected to the phrase, that the credit of the nation had been improved; but where did he find any such language? The terms were, that "our commercial and maritime superiority had been improved." Was not this the fact? Had we not received a most convincing proof of it in the statements of our imports and exports, made by a noble lord this night? He would not attempt to enumerate our great naval victories, which had nearly annihilated the navy of our enemies. They were known to every gentlemen who heard him; and future ages would contemplate the gallant exploits of a Howe, a St. Vincent, a Duncan, and a Nelson, with no less enthusiastic admiration and pride, than those who were immediate witnesses of the services which they had rendered to their country. For these reasons he thought that the objections of his hon. friends to the amendment were without foundation, and therefore it should have his cordial support. He begged the present administration to accept his praise and gratitude, as an individual, for having conferred the blessings of peace upon the nation.

Mr. *Whitbread* said, it would, in his opinion, have been policy in the noble lord who moved the amendment to have couched it in such terms as would have met the sanction of the whole House; and to enable him to vote for the amendment, he must move for certain words to be omitted.

The question being put, that the words proposed to be left out, stand part of the question,

The House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	The Earl Temple - -	20
	General Gascoyne -	
Noes	General Maitland - -	276
	Mr. Bond - - - -	

Mr. Windham's motion consequently passed in the negative. The amendment proposed by Mr. Sheridan was then put and negatived. The amendment proposed by lord Hawkesbury was adopted without a division, and the House adjourned at half past four in the morning.

List of the Minority.

Bruce, lord	Lennox, general
Baker, W.	Laurence, Dr.
Cooke, Bryan	Morpeth, lord
Chamberlayne, W.	Poyntz, W.
Dundas, Charles	Windham, rt. hon. W.
Ellis, George	Wynn, sir W. W.
Ellis, Charles	Wynn, C. W.
Elliot, W.	Young, sir W.
Foljambe, F.	Tellers.
Folkestone, viscount	Temple, earl
Grenville, Thomas	Gascoyne, general
Kensington, lord	

Claims of the Prince of Wales.] May 10. Mr. *Tyrwhitt* said, he was sure the House would hear with pleasure, that the claims of the illustrious personage in whose service he was, had at last found

Digitized by Google

their way into a court of justice. However, he trusted the House would not think the time wasted which they had employed in considering those claims, when they were told that his Royal Highness's petition of right during the time of the late lord chancellor had lain in the office six years and a half, without receiving an answer. If the learned judge, who now held the seals, should be against the claims of his Royal Highness, they must rest for ever. But, he trusted that the able and honourable men, whose legal assistance the prince of Wales had, would find their opinion confirmed by that of the chancellor. In that case, he should deem it his duty to lay the result before the House. He took that opportunity of stating, that since the year 1795, 525,000*l.* had been paid of his Royal Highness's debts, not from the public purse, but from a portion of his income set apart for that purpose. He hoped that the sum it would be found his Royal Highness was entitled to would enable him to pay what still remained; for it would give him the liveliest satisfaction to be able to pay his own debts with his own means.

Debate in the Commons on the Bull-baiting Bill.] May 24. Mr. Dent having moved, that the bill to prevent Bull-baiting and Bull-running, be read a second time,

Sir *Richard Hill* said:—Sir, I rise in behalf of a race of poor friendless beings who certainly cannot speak for themselves. I shall, however, be brief, being well assured, that if the voice of common sense, common humanity, and uncommon distress and misery cannot be heard, all I can say will be of no avail. Instead, therefore, of multiplying words, I shall bring forward some facts, which I hope will prove the means of setting forth the barbarous custom of bull-baiting in its true light. Sir Richard then read some passages which he had selected, mentioning the shocking cruelties which had been inflicted on a poor animal, in order to make him furious enough to afford diversion to his brutal tormentors; but the tortured creature soon becoming outrageous, he was entangled with ropes, his hoofs cut off, and baited again, whilst he feebly sustained and defended himself on his stumps. He then brought a striking citation from sir Matthew Hale, where, in an address to the Deity, that great man expresses his sentiments concerning cruelty towards the brute creation. He next said, that after the testimony of so illustrious a person as sir M. Hale, he could adduce no higher human authority, and should therefore finish his quotations with a short word from a source the purity of which, he trusted, would never be disputed in that great assembly of professing Christians, whatever it might be in a French convention. He who was at once the wisest of men, and the greatest of kings, had declared that "the merciful man regarded the life of his beast, but that the tender mercies of the wicked were cruel." There was wanted no comment to prove that, in this saying, Solomon contrasted the difference between the good man and the wicked man, in one particular instance, which related to the conduct of each towards dumb creatures. He said, he had in his pocket many letters from the most respectable characters in the kingdom, setting forth the dreadful cruelties, as well as shocking accidents, which had accrued from the abominable practice. He also mentioned a letter which he had received from a worthy clerical friend and brother magistrate, in the district wherein he himself acted, in which the respectable name of the chairman of the quarter-sessions was added, as joining in the general wish of the county of Salop, for the abolition of a custom which had been pregnant with such horrid barbarities. Sir Richard added, that he had several more petitions, besides those already on the table, but he was ashamed to take up the time of the House by reciting them. In Ireland an act had passed for the abolition of bull-baiting; and as the Irish gentlemen had been so favourable to their own bulls, he was sure they would not be less indulgent to ours. Sir Richard then requested that the petition from Norwich (the place which Mr. Windham represents) might be read; but there being no such petition from thence against the bill, sir Richard said he might reasonably have supposed that all the cathedral church, together with the mayor and corporation, had sent up such a petition. It had been objected, that this bill was only the beginning of a system; but what system?—a system of humanity! a system of peace! And was this system so grating to the ears of some gentlemen, that they could not even bear to hear of a definitive treaty between a dog and a bull? The amiable sex, in general, were advocates for the bill. There might, indeed, be some ex-

Digitized by Google

ceptions; but where should we find them? Perhaps, staggering out of a gin-shop in St. Giles's; perhaps sitting over an oyster-tub, or riding in a cinder-cart, but it could not strictly be said of any one of these ladies, "Grace is in all her steps, Heaven in her eye; in all her gestures dignity and love." Though he had observed, at the beginning of his speech, that he was an advocate for poor beings who could not speak for themselves, there came into his mind a fact, wherein even a dumb animal, through the immediate power of the Almighty, rebuked the cruelty of his owner. He then mentioned the case of Balaam's ass; and added, that if an angel interposed on the occasion, surely it was not a circumstance improper to be adduced in a Christian assembly.

Mr. *Windham* said, that the evil complained of by the supporters of this bill was not such as justified the interference of the legislature. It was not an evil that had "grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength: but, on the contrary, it had declined as they had increased. An allusion had been made to a petition from Norwich on the subject; and an insinuation had been thrown out, that it was a practice generally prevalent in that neighbourhood. The fact, however, was, that within the last twenty years only two instances were remembered of a bull bait in Norwich or its vicinity. Decreasing as the practice was all over the country, he could not but think that the discussion of such paltry local complaints was wholly unworthy of the legislature of a great nation. It was part of a system of introducing subjects of a similar kind into parliament, which he could not but reprobate in the strongest terms. The subject was, in all points of view degrading; but it appeared more especially unworthy of being entertained by the imperial parliament, at a time when so many other subjects of great national importance were calling for the attention of the House. Such a sort of public interference with matters unworthy of the consideration of the legislature could be productive of no consequences but such as were mischievous. No law could be desirable which would be attended with no national advantage, and this advantage ought to be well weighed before a legislative enactment was required. A law in all cases necessarily involved a certain degree of restraint; and it was also to be taken into the account, that it could not be carried into effect without vesting in those who were to enforce its provisions a considerable degree of discretion. If such a law were to be passed, it could not act by a silent operation. On the contrary, it would be enforced by those who principally exerted themselves for the observance of the game laws, and who, in enforcing its provisions, could not possibly escape a large share of public odium. Such was the subject now before the House, which contained nothing of public or general interest. To procure the discussion of such subjects, it was necessary to resort to canvass and intrigue. Members, whose attendance was induced by local considerations in most cases of this description, were present; the discussion if any took place, was managed by the friends of the measure; and the decision of the House was perhaps ultimately a matter of mere chance. The present bill was precisely one of a similar description, and but from the circumstance of the subject having excited some attention in a former session it might have been considered by chance, and agreed to without discussion. On this general principle, then, he was inclined to oppose the discussion of the subject, as totally unworthy of the dignity of the House. But he had, in the next place, to object to the manner in which the subject of bull-baiting had been considered, not from a general view of the subject, but from a few insulated examples. The friends of the bill took a view of the practice complained of, merely as exhibited on a minute scale, and from them consequences were drawn. They put the bull and the dog as exhibited in a few instances, into the eye of their microscope, and through this confined medium desired the House to contemplate the general practice. The cruelties of the practice were the only circumstances held up to observation, and every thing else was kept out of view. But if this mode of viewing the subject were to be adopted, he saw no reason why all other sports should not be contemplated in a similar manner. If the cruelty of bull-baiting was thus to be held up to the attention of the House in such glaring colours, why was not hunting, shooting, fishing, and all other amusements of a similar description, to be judged of by similar principles? If the effects of the one were to be viewed through the medium of a microscope, why were not the consequences of the other to be scrutinized with equal severity? By

Digitized by Google

viewing objects in this way, not only would false conclusions be drawn, but the objects themselves would appear inverted, and in a way never intended by nature. Things would not only not appear the same, but their whole aspect would be reversed. Nothing could be more pleasing to the eye than the sight of female beauty; but even if the fairest complexion were contemplated through a microscope, deformities would appear, and hairs unobservable to the naked eye would present themselves as the bristles on the back of a boar. Such attacks as the present on the amusements of the people struck him in no other light than as the first step to a reform of the manners of the lower orders. Those who, when young men, had formed projects for the reformation of parliament, finding themselves disappointed in those projects now formed the design of reforming the manners of the people. In their desires to accomplish this object there were two great parties united, the Jacobins and the Methodists, though the objects they had in view by this change were essentially different. By the former every rural amusement was condemned with a rigour only to be equalled by the severity of the puritanical decisions. They were described as a part of the lewd sports and Antichristian pastimes which in times of puritanism, had been totally proscribed. Every thing joyous was to be prohibited, to prepare the people for the reception of their fanatical doctrines. By the Jacobins on the other hand, it was an object of important consideration to give to the disposition of the lower orders a character of greater seriousness and gravity, as the means of facilitating the reception of their tenets; and to aid this design, it was necessary to discourage the practice of what were termed idle sports and useless amusements. This was a design which he should ever think it his duty strenuously to oppose. For, though he wished that the people might become more virtuous, more attentive to the duties of religion, better fathers, better husbands, better children, he could never agree that for this purpose their social habits should be changed; that they should prove more austere, more unsociable, and more self-conceited than they now were. Whenever he saw any steps taken to produce this effect, he could not consider them in any other light than as so many steps of a departure from the old English character. The habits long established among the people were the best fitted to resist the schemes of innovation; and it was among the labouring and illiterate part of the people that Jacobinical doctrines had made the smallest progress. In this respect indeed, it was otherwise with Methodist doctrines. They throve best on a stubborn soil; but they had the effect of preparing it for the reception of the doctrines of Jacobinism. In this work, indeed, the two parties mutually over-reached each other. The party of Methodists invited the people to read, and in the first instance they might peruse a few Jacobinical productions, that they might read with greater advantage their fanatical productions at a future period. In the same way, the Jacobins wished to divert the people from every social pursuit; reading they strenuously recommended; and, though a few Methodistical books were, in the first instance, not wholly proscribed, they were allowed only to fit the mind for the reception of their poisonous tenets. The effect of their exertions was the same, though thus differently pursued. It was equally directed to the destruction of the old English character, by the abolition of all rural sports. So much convinced was he that this was the object of such a bill as the present, that he almost felt disposed to rest his opposition to it on this footing. Out of the whole number of the disaffected, he questioned if a single bull-baiter could be found, or if a single sportsman had distinguished himself in the Corresponding Society: the hunting for which they reserved themselves was of a noble kind; they disdained the low pursuits of ordinary sportsmen; the game against which their efforts were directed were of no less a quality than kings. When he spoke of this union of the Methodists and Jacobins, he did not mean to deny that, in their political principles, as well as their ultimate objects, they essentially differed. Religion was an ingredient in the character of the Methodists, which was directly hostile to the views of Jacobinism; for in the composition of modern Jacobinism religion formed no part. But they were not, on serious consideration, so very far removed from each other as might at first sight appear. As a general assertion, it would be admitted, that hot water was farther removed from congelation than what was cold; but when the hot water was exposed to the air, it was more speedily frozen. In a similar manner, though in the abstract Methodism

Digitized by Google

and Jacobinism seemed to be the farthest removed from each other, yet facts showed that the tenets of the one prepared the mind for the adoption of the doctrines of the other. In confirmation of this mutual design of these parties, the right hon. member took occasion to quote a passage from the memoirs of a rural poet of considerable celebrity (Bloomfield, author of the Farmer's Boy, &c. by Mr. Capel Lofft) in which it is mentioned that the poet was in the habit of spending his time in reading in his garret, or attending a debating society, which the editor recommends as a much more worthy mode of employing himself, than if he had been occupied in gambling, drinking, or fighting. Mr. W. paid some very handsome compliments to the originality of many of the thoughts of this poet, to his natural simplicity, and unaffected elegance of language. He wished what he now said to be considered as an unexaggerated declaration of his opinion of the merits of the poem. But with this high opinion of the merits of the poet, he had doubts how far it was proper to encourage ideas of literary profit or renown in those who had been bred to a useful trade. In particular instances it might not be prejudicial; but to inculcate such notions as those contained in the passage of the memoirs to which he had referred, could tend only to a mischievous purpose. He regretted the minuteness with which he was obliged to enter into the consideration of the subject, but threw the blame on those by whom such a subject was introduced. An examination of the bill was not less necessary than if it had referred to a subject of the highest national importance. To examine the character of a daub of Teniers was often a work of more difficulty than to describe the beauties of the Madona of Raphael. —He next proceeded to read an extract from a sermon, which he declared he should in all probability never have read, but from the circumstances of its having been sent to him by the author, in which the cruelty of bull-baiting was described in very strong terms; and the man who would encourage the practice was represented as a person who would not hesitate to sheath a blade in the bowels of his fellow creatures. That the practice of sports even when they were of a cruel kind, tended to render mankind cruel, he denied, and he founded his assertion on the history of all ages and countries. The most elegant scholars, and the finest poets in antient or modern times, from Xenophon to Virgil and Milton, were loud in the praises of many of those sports which, with equal justice, might be called cruel, as that which had been so loudly condemned. What was the inference he drew from all this, but that cruelty was not at all the object of these sports though in certain instances it might be the result? If he were asked what was the object of bull-baiting? he should be better able to give an intelligible answer, than if he were asked a similar question with regard to hunting, or other amusements of a similar description. That a certain degree of gratification might be received from the spectacle of the combats of animals, the history of all ages sufficiently proved. Even the philosophy of the present age took part in a practice which had prevailed in this country for centuries. In the time of queen Elizabeth, that which was now despised and reprobated as the amusement only of the lowest of the people, was an amusement courted by all ranks. Since that period, bull-baiting had declined, and hunting had usurped its room. The one had become the favourite amusement of the great and the other had sunk in dignity till it was, in a great measure, annihilated. And yet it was at such a moment as this that the House were called upon to put it down by a legislative enactment. Was this, he asked, a time to abridge the amusements of the common people, when we were meditating the extension of the game laws to Ireland?—But the riots and confusion which the practice of bull-baiting occasioned were urged as another reason for the necessity of the interference of the legislature. This was a favourite argument on a former occasion when the subject was before the House, with an hon. friend of his (Mr. Wilberforce) the member for Yorkshire. In this instance, the conduct of his right hon. friend put him in mind of the story of the butcher who ran about seeking for his knife while it was in his teeth; for he was searching every quarter in quest of objects of reform, while those in his own neighbourhood were totally overlooked. When he condemned the excesses to which bull-baiting gave rise, had he forgotten all the confusion and riot which horse-racing produced? He himself did not object to the practice of horse-racing, since there were so many individuals to whom it was a source of pleasure. But he might be allowed to remind the House of the observation of

Digitized by Google

Dr. Johnson, who had expressed his surprise at the paucity of human pleasures, when horse-racing constituted one of their number. Perhaps the anxiety displayed by many persons in the pursuit of this pleasure, might be considered as approximating to the efforts of the degenerate emperors of Rome, to gratify a palate which luxury had rendered insensible to the ordinary materials of food. To horse-racing he was himself personally no more an enemy than he was to boxing—though in making this observation he was far from meaning to disparage boxing so far, as to put them on an equal footing, or to insinuate that so poor, mean, and wretched an amusement as the one, was at all to vie in importance with the other, which was connected with ideas of personal merit, and individual dignity. But he was confident, that, in point of effect on the morals of the people, the influence of horse-racing was infinitely more pernicious than any which bull-baiting could produce. What did a horse-race consist of? What was the description of persons whom it encouraged to assemble? They consisted of all the riff-raff from every part of the country. There were to be seen collected all the black-legs of the metropolis, the markers at billiard-tables, apprentices who had embezzled the property of their masters, and who were afterwards obliged to resort to knavery to cover their fraud, gingerbread venders, strolling gamblers, in a word, infamous characters of every description. Such was the description of individuals whom horse-racing assembled. Now, what was the object which such an amusement had in view? He confessed himself unable to view it in any other light than as a species of gambling. It did not seem to him to give exercise for one generous feeling. His hon. friend had, however, taken a cumbrous leap over no less than nine racing-grounds in the county which he represented, and had never descended till he had alighted at a bull-bait. He had totally neglected the duty of destroying abuses at home, but had spent all his labour, and exerted all his zeal, in poaching on foreign manors.—So much for the argument, that bull-baiting was productive of riot and confusion. He next recurred to the inexpediency of abridging the amusements of the lower orders at the present moment. There was a very numerous class of pleasures from which their circumstances in life excluded them. To the pleasures of intellect, that source of the purest delight, their situation denied them access. To the accommodations of social life, so far as change of situation and place was concerned, they were strangers. The rich had their feasts, their assemblies, their parties of pleasure, their pic nics, every thing, in short, which could afford them gratification. From amusements of this kind the lower orders were excluded by their poverty. But there was another class of pleasure from which they were, in a great measure, excluded by the rigour of the law. The authority of the magistrate was often interposed to counteract even their harmless pleasures. To dance at all out of season, was to draw on their heads the rigor of unrelenting justice. The great might gratify themselves by a thousand different ways, and the magistrate did not conceive it within his sphere to interrupt their amusements. But it was known that an organ did not sound more harshly in the ears of a puritan, than did the notes of a fiddle in those of a magistrate, when he himself was not to be of the party. He made an allusion to a beautiful passage of Sterne, in which he describes the condition of the lower orders at the close of the day, when labour was finished, when families met together to join in social pleasures, when the old encouraged the sports of the young, and rejoiced in the amusements of their children. But what was all this when translated into plain English? It conveyed to us merely the idea of a hop. In confirmation of his ideas about the restraints to which the amusements of the lower orders were subjected, he referred to certain transactions which took place in a square at the West end of the town (Berkeley-square) a few years ago. The whole neighbourhood had been alarmed; the most serious apprehensions were excited; the aid of the military was judged necessary; and after all this idle pomp of authority, it was discovered that the formidable disturbers of the public peace were a few domestics dancing to the music of a blind sailor's fiddle. It was to be regretted, that many gentlemen should be anxious to deprive the lower orders of their amusements, from a seeming apprehension, that if they were suffered to enjoy those recreations they would not labour sufficiently, and might become, from their improvidence, a burthen to the poor-rates, to which the rich must contribute. This

Digitized by Google

was a most injudicious system of thinking, and he cautioned the rich against acting upon it. The efficient part of the community for labour ought to be encouraged in their exertions, rather by furnishing them with occasional amusements, than by depriving them of one, as this bill proposed—a bill, the supporters of which would take them to the Tabernacle or to Jacobinism—for, if to poverty were to be added a privation of amusements, he knew nothing that could operate more strongly to goad the mind into desperation, and to prepare the poor for that dangerous enthusiasm which was analogous to Jacobinism.—He objected to the way in which gentlemen would have the House to look at the consequences of bull-baiting, by citing particular accidents, and from that concluding that the practice was cruel, and that the bull in baiting was treated with cruelty. He believed the bull felt a satisfaction in the contest, not less so than the hound did when he heard the sound of the horn which summoned him to the chace. True it was, that young bulls, or those which were never baited before, showed reluctance to be tied to the stake; but those bulls, which according to the language of the sport, were called game bulls, who were used to baiting, approached the stake and stood there while preparing, for the contest with the utmost composure. If the bull felt no pleasure, and was cruelly dealt with, surely the dogs had also some claim to compassion; but the fact was, that both seemed equally arduous in the conflict; and the bull, like every other animal, while it had the better side, did not appear to feel unpleasantly: it would be ridiculous to say he felt no pain; yet, when on such occasions he exhibited no sign of terror, it was a demonstrable proof that he felt some pleasure. With regard to the petition from Stamford against this bill, it was entitled to the most respectful attention, for it came from a body of sober loyal men, who attended to their several vocations, and never meddled with politics, faithful to their landlord (the marquis of Exeter), with whom, however, they could not avoid being a little displeased for his endeavours to deprive them of their favourite sport by supporting this bill. Those petitioners state, that this amusement had been enjoyed by their town, for a period of 5 or 600 years; and the antiquity of the thing was deserving of respect—for respect for antiquity was the best preservation of the church and state—it was by connecting the past with the present, and the present with the future, that genuine patriotism was produced and preserved.—He repeated that he was shocked and scandalized at the manner in which the advocates of this bill would persuade the House to act; to prohibit an old amusement, because it was the amusement of the poor; for the objection was not to the cruelty of the amusement, or the scope of the bill ought to be enlarged. Those gentlemen seemed to be influenced by a species of philosophy dictated by their wives, one of whom might be supposed to address her husband thus:—"My dear, do you know, that after you went out with your dogs this morning, I walked into the village, and was shocked to see a set of wretches at a bull-bait, tormenting the poor animal. I wish, dear, you would speak to our member, and request him to bring a bill into parliament to prevent that horrid practice." Independent of the injustice of encroaching upon the few small amusements of the poor, he would beg the House to consider the consequence of rendering them discontented or dispirited, by leaving nothing for them but the wide waste of labour. The reason why our labourers were capable of more work than slaves, was obvious; because they felt that they worked for themselves; and, according as their profit, or their prospect of pleasure, which was the same thing, was increased, just so did their labour generally increase also. Such a bill as this to abridge men's pleasures, and to hold out a kind of direct hint to them that they never could labour enough, was sufficient to Jacobinize a whole country. In proof of the assertion, that bull-baiting did not operate to brutalize men's minds, he had only to turn the attention of the House to Lancashire and Staffordshire, where that practice principally prevailed. Those counties were known to produce the best soldiers in the army, and the militia of Staffordshire were known to have been selected, from their good behaviour, to do duty about the royal person; a pretty good proof that bull-baiting did not produce such effects on the morals of the people as the puritans affected to deplore, but rather such as the Jacobins in France and England very sincerely lamented. It was mockery in men to talk of the sufferings of animals from the sports of the lower orders, while

Digitized by Google

they themselves were doing something worse. To the difference between the jolly bull-baiting peasant and his demure gloomy censors, he would apply the words of the poet—

"Tom struts a soldier, open, bold and brave;
"Will sneaks a scrivener, an exceeding knave."

The right hon. gentlemen concluded with stating, that if the bill before the House should be adopted, he should, for the sake of consistency and the character of parliament, conceive it his duty to move for leave to bring in a bill to prohibit hunting, shooting, fishing, and all the sports of the field practised by the higher orders.

Mr. *Courtenay* said, he was surprised to hear his right hon. friend complain, that the time of the House, at this important period, was employed on such a comparatively trifling subject as bull-baiting; for he had proved incontrovertibly, that bull-baiting was the great support of the constitution in church and state, and that the generosity, courage, and humanity of the lower ranks of the community solely originated from this heroic and laudable species of entertainment, which had distinguished both the dogs and men of this country from the earliest records of history. His right hon. friend had also obviated all objections to this rational sport, by most ingeniously and philosophically proving that the bull (which seemed to excite so much pity and compassion), derived a singular pleasure from the exhibition; and there was no doubt of the fact, though many gentlemen seemed to smile at the assertion. Yet there was no reason to suppose that the bull, after he had been baited two or three times, from that philosophical principle of association so ably elucidated by Locke, might not enjoy great and triumphant pleasure from the consciousness of his own prowess, from the shouts and applauses of exulting multitudes, who beheld this noble animal bellowing, and tossing the ferocious dogs, who attacked him, into another element; a sight equally singular, picturesque, and enchanting: and which had been happily described by one of our Epic poets,

"Up to the stars the growling mastiffs fly,
"And add new monsters to the frighted sky."

The right hon. gentleman might have analogically elucidated this wonderful principle of association; the source of some curious properties of mind, and by which modern philosophers have explained many phænomena in the moral world. He should just mention one instance, probably familiar to many gentlemen, who must have observed a bear dancing to music in the street. It might be asked, how was this awkward and uncouth animal disciplined into this graceful agility? Solely by association. The mode was, by putting a hot iron under the hind feet of the bear, and holding him in an upright situation, and playing a tune on the fiddle; the pain made the animal move briskly about, and change his position as quick as possible. After being sufficiently drilled to these manœuvres, he was publicly exhibited as a dancing bear; and the burning pain became so associated with the music, that whenever a fiddle was played, the same impression was conveyed to his brain, and produced similar gesticulations, and correspondent motions in his feet. Some gentlemen had expatiated on the cruelty of torturing an animal merely for sport and diversion: he begged leave to differ from them; a bull might be baited, from a pure principle of humanity, to preserve his life; for it was evident, if he was not reserved for this entertainment, he would be consigned to the slaughter-house; and he would seriously ask those affected philanthropists, whether, if the bull had his option, he would not rather prefer being baited twenty times, to the being knocked on the head once?—The right hon. gentleman had also proved, that bull-baiting saved us from all the horrors of Jacobinism and fanaticism. Surely this was of infinite importance to church and state! he should therefore hope a sum of money might be voted, and a number of bulls and dogs purchased, and dispersed over the kingdom, that morality and loyalty might be every where disseminated in the most agreeable way; and that the lower ranks of the community might receive instructions and lectures on their duty, without the irksome attendance of listening to a sermon, or being catechised at a parish church. He would also beg leave to ask, how the ex-ministers (who had, with grief of heart, seen the death-warrant of the constitution signed by the peace), could now employ themselves if this bill passed. Cut off at once from all the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war;" in what a desponding situation must they be left, without something

Digitized by Google

of a warlike sport, such as bull-baiting, to keep up their spirits! Why, they might querulously exclaim, like the French gentleman, when Louis 14th, by one edict, had forbidden gaming, and by another duelling, who passionately cried out, "How does his majesty think a gentleman can divert himself?" Besides, through the interest of a noble friend of theirs, a few ferocious Corsican bulls might be imported. The most formidable and the fiercest might be called Buonaparté; and, by the strength of imagination, he might be identified with the first consul, and baited by English mastiffs, and by this happy expedient, patriotism and diversion equally united. Why does man enjoy superior wisdom and sagacity, but to call out the inclinations and propensities of the brute creation. What a glorious sight to see a dog attack a bull! It animates a British heart;—

"To see him growl, and snap, and snarl, and bite,
"Pin the bull's nose, and prove instinctive might."

Besides, if bull-baiting was given up, the characteristic of our British dogs, so classically celebrated in the Augustan age of literature, would be totally lost. Claudian says,—"Magnaque taurorum fracturæ colla Britannæ." Symmachus mentions seven Irish bull-dogs—"Septem Scottici canes," as then first produced in the circus at Rome, to the great admiration of the people. The city of Norwich anciently patronised this animating patriotic amusement, and furnished Richard the 2nd with three bull-dogs and a bear; and no doubt would rejoice at having this regal constitutional sport renewed. These dogs are also distinguished from others by a surly dignity of aspect, a genuine courage, and an unshaken and ferocious fidelity to their masters. They were indeed suspected by Henry the 7th of a tendency to the dangerous principles of republicanism and Jacobinism (but he was an avaricious tyrant, and an usurper); and this monarch ordered one of them (a bull dog) to be hanged, because it had the courage, most treacherously and disloyally to engage singly with its lord and sovereign the lion. But James the 1st, equally venerated for spirit, wisdom, and humanity, often displayed all the splendour, elegance, and magnificence of his court, to embellish and decorate the favourite festival; and the lords and ladies of that auspicious æra encouraged and promoted a divertisement intimately connected with the prosperity, happiness, and glory of the kingdom. He hoped he had said enough to induce the House to negative this dangerous and opprobrious bill; but if it unfortunately went to a committee, he would introduce a clause to exempt some sacred spot in Norfolk from its fatal operation, where bull-baiting might be exultingly exhibited, and where the ex-ministers and their friends might, with joy and gladness of heart, be delighted with this image of war, and enjoy *otium cum dignitate*, till they were again called by the voice of the people and their sovereign to guide the helm of the state, and restore the triumphs of their country, by pursuing the same salutary and glorious measures which had distinguished their councils and administration.

Colonel *Grosvenor* thought the lower orders of the people entitled to their amusements, as well as the higher. The higher orders had their Billington; and why not allow the lower orders their bull?

General *Gascoyne* observed, that in the county in which he resided, the practice of bull-baiting differed from that in Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Hampshire. In Shropshire, he understood, the bulls were ornamented with flowers previous to their being baited, and their horns gilt and decorated. He said, bull-baiting was so popular a sport, that a bull was found the most attractive sign at an ale-house; and an hon. friend of his had a bull that had raised a regiment of cavalry, and another of foot, amounting altogether to 1,300 men; insomuch that the bull was called the recruiting serjeant; and what was particularly fortunate, his friend boasted that the population of the country was by means of the bull increased in a much greater degree than the recruiting service thinned it. He was of opinion, that this was not a subject worthy the consideration of the House; and he could scarcely believe that those who supported him were serious. If there was any abuse of the practice, the legislature might enact a regulation particularly applying to it; but the existence of a partial abuse was no ground for destroying the practice altogether. He considered it an amusement which the lower orders were entitled to; and it was with regret he observed a disposition in many of the members to deprive the poor of their recreations, and force them to pass their time in chaunting at conventicles.

Digitized by Google

Mr. *Wilberforce* thought that the subject had been treated with too much levity. If the good effects which had been attributed to it were really produced by bull-baiting, why not move to have it rendered more general? But the truth was, every argument employed to defend the practice had been merely palliative. Mere opinions had been stated to prove that it was nowise hurtful to morality; but for his own part, he thought it fostered every bad and barbarous principle of our nature; and he was sorry that any one so respectable as his right hon. friend had been found to defend it. He was certain if that right hon. gentleman, or any other member, had inquired into the subject minutely, he would no longer defend a practice which degraded human nature to a level with the brutes. The evidence against the practice was derived from respectable magistrates. From such evidence he had derived a variety of facts, which were too horrid to detail to the House. A bull, that honest, harmless, useful animal, was forcibly tied to a stake, and a number of bull-dogs set upon him. If he was not sufficiently roused by the pain of their attacks, the most barbarous expedients were hit upon to awake in him that fury which was necessary to the amusement of the inhuman spectators. One instance of the latter kind he would state; a bull had been bought for the sole purpose of being baited; but upon being fixed to the stake, he was found of so mild a nature, that all the attacks of the dogs were insufficient to excite him to the requisite degree of fury; upon which those who bought him refused to pay the price to the original owner, unless he could be made to serve their purpose: the owner, after numberless expedients, at last sawed off his horns, and poured into them a poignant sort of liquid, that quickly excited the animal to the wished-for degree of fury. When bulls were bought merely for the purpose of being baited, the people who bought them wished to have as much diversion (if diversion such cruelty could be called) as possible for their money. The consequence was, that every art, even fire, had been employed to rouse the exhausted animal to fresh exertions, and there were instances where he had expired in protracted agonies amidst the flames. It had been said, that it would be wrong to deprive the lower orders of their amusements, of the only cordial drop of life which supported them under their complicated burthens. Wretched, indeed, must be the condition of the common people of England, if their whole happiness consisted in the practice of such barbarity! Such a supposition was a satire, not only on the name of Englishmen, but on the Creator who formed reasonable creatures with such barbarous propensities. Of all the arguments ever invented by Jacobinism to prove the wretched state of the lower orders, this surely was the strongest, if the only enjoyment of the common people of England was derived from the practice of bull-baiting. It had been said, that this practice contributed to keep alive the martial ardour of the nation. But had it not been proved, by experience, that the greatest, the most renowned characters, had always been the most humane? When we considered that the victim of this human amusement was not left to the free exertion of his natural powers, but bound to a stake, and baited with animals instinctively his foes, and urged by acclamation to attack him, must we not conclude that the practice was inconsistent with every manly principle, cruel in its designs, and cowardly in its execution? No man was more unwilling than he was to encroach upon the amusements of the lower orders; on the contrary, he wished to rescue them from the ignominious reproach cast upon them, that they were so ignorant and so debased as to be fit only to enjoy the cowardly amusement of tormenting an harmless and fettered animal to death.—But it had been stated, that the present bill ought not to be passed, without also preventing shooting, hunting, and every other attack on inferior animals. Suppose these diversions to be equally inhuman, would not the admission of this argument infer, that no vice was to be abolished because all of the same species could not at once be done away? But it was by no means proper to place the diversions of shooting and horse-racing on a footing with bull-baiting. Shooting afforded exercise to the body, and the birds who fell by it were subjected to no pain beyond immediate deprivation of life. In horse-racing, two generous animals, with scarcely any compulsion, exerted their speed against each other, and returned from the course with small abatement of spirits or vigour. But bull-baiting not only excited the natural passions of the animal for the amusement of the spectators, but also subjected it to the most in-

Digitized by Google

human cruelties, till it sunk under the pressure of its complicated miseries. It was easy to dress up a metaphysical picture in one's closet, till the author was led to admire the image of his own creation. But if instead of such refinements we attended to the voice of common sense, we should be convinced that no happiness could result from a practice so cruel, base, and unjust—that no pleasure could be derived from wantonly torturing the brutes which were given us, not for such barbarous purposes, but for our use and pleasure. Without such an amusement, the common people of England had surely a sufficient number of innocent amusements, in their festivals, their gambols, their athletic exercises. His right hon. friend, while picturing the happiness derived from bull-baiting, had forgot that it was confined to an individual, while his wretched family excluded from any participation of the spectacle, were condemned to feel the want of that money which he squandered away on such occasions. He had never heard a speech tending so strongly to make the people dissatisfied with their condition. It was not his wish to deprive them of their manly recreations, but he could not give this character to a diversion founded on cowardice and cruelty. Great writers had placed the summit of human happiness, not in picnics, but in the cottage of the peasant, surrounded with his smiling family. This was the happiness, and this the recreation, varied and combined with manly exercises abroad, which belonged naturally to the people of England; and he would not suffer them to be degraded by supposing, that like bull-dogs, they had an instinctive desire for this sport. One thing more he should take notice of, namely, the charge which the right hon. gentleman had made on him of jumping over the horse-racing. He was not himself a frequenter of horse-races; and though they were very frequent in the county which he had the honour to represent, it was not thought an indispensable duty in the representative of that county to frequent races. He repeated, however, that he did not think it so cruel to see two generous animals exert their powers against each other; and if there was any cruelty in horse-races, it was in the matches against time, which would have been a better theme for the right hon. gentleman's censure, unless he had that in reserve as a public amusement after bull-baiting should be abolished. On a comparison of the different sports, it would be found that none of them partook of cruelty so largely as bull-baiting. No man could be partial to it, except from an imaginary view; a real knowledge would silence all its advocates.

Mr. *W. Smith* declared, that he thought the right hon. gentleman, from being goaded by the terrors of Jacobinism, had run as wild as any bull that ever was baited. He denied that bull-baiting was necessary to the happiness of the people. If it were wished to keep them in a degraded and brutal state, it would be right to inure them to such spectacles. But he who had a just notion of their dignity, and wished to raise them in the scale of being, would try to cultivate their minds, to polish their manners, and to instruct them in the principles of morality and religion.

——Ingenuas dedicisse fideliter artes,
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

He never heard arguments of a wilder or more eccentric nature than those which had been urged in favour of bull-baiting. He thought it absurd to say that government were not entitled to interfere with any amusement of the people, provided it was found to be of pernicious consequences. If the common people of this country were capable of relishing no amusement but bull-baiting, they were arrived at a state of debasement beyond what he could have conceived. He was convinced this was not the case, but that the abolition of so inhuman a practice would be approved of by all ranks of people.

Mr. *Newbolt* denied, that those instances cited by the hon. member who opposed the bill bore any comparison with the practice in question. He did not consider the prohibition as drawing, in principle, any line of distinction between the rich and the poor; and he would support the bill, principally because the practice it went to suppress tended to disgrace the national character.

Mr. *Frankland* said, that all those who had argued in support of the measure, had entirely mistaken the principle upon which the amusement in question proceeded, as well as the motives and objects of those who engaged in it; and he deprecated unjustifiable appeals which were made to the passions of the House on the occasion. He contended, that if the amusement involved, in any degree, the practice of cruelty, it was not induced by those who participated in the sport for the

Digitized by Google

sake of cruelty. In some points of view, the amusement of horse-racing might also be termed cruel; there was not a year in which numbers were not killed in that sport; but as horses were a lively and spirited animal, he was inclined to think the amusement in no sense a cruel one. So might it be said of stag hunting—the animal in that case, was fed and pampered previous to the chace, not with a reference to its future torture, but that it might yield the greater sport—the animal often, necessarily, lost his life in the chace—its heart was what was called broken: did gentlemen think that such a process could take place without producing great agony? The hounds often fastened on his chest, and tore him to pieces—and yet such a practice had entirely escaped the humanity of the legislature; nay, the practice was even regulated by legislative provisions. The principle on which this bill seemed to proceed would go to libel the most exalted characters in the country. Recurring to bull-baiting, he stated, that none of the cruelties imputed to the practice took place. The assumption that the practice of bull-baiting had increased, was false. The national character was, he thought, implicated in the present question. It was the encouragement given to such manly sports and invigorating exercises that made us what we were. He expatiated on the virtues of the English bull-dog. The people and the animals of this country were of a peculiar cast and character, both original and excellent in their kind; and animals, as we learnt from ancient writers, were often the best preceptors of men. On the same principle proceeded the maxim, that "wise men learned more from fools, than fools from wise men." With respect to the penalties held forth by the bill, he thought them rigorous. The first time the legislature ever interfered with the sports of the country was in the time of Henry 8th, in consequence of which the people addicted themselves to sedentary and unmanly pursuits, which in after-times the legislature thought it proper to decry. So would it be in the present instance: the liberal and national sports of chuckfarthing and turnpenny would be adopted, and to these the people would be advised to give their days and nights.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that one hon. colonel had shortly declared his opposition to the bill, by vindicating the rights of the lower orders to their favourite sports; and had asked, if the fashionable world had their Billington, why the lower orders should not have their bull? But the hon. gentleman contented himself with exhibiting this short specimen of his eloquence; and just said enough to convince the House that he was in the right to leave off. An hon. general near him, too, had talked of the sport of bull-baiting in that part of the country where he resided; but in a manner not to illustrate the argument of the hon. member who spoke last, that it was a lesson of morality; for all that he stated in its favour was, that a baited bull made a good recruiting serjeant, but at the same time promoted idleness and drunkenness among the men, and profligacy among the women, to such a degree as made amends to the population of the country for the recruits decoyed away, by promoting a certain species of intercourse which he believed would hardly recommend the continuance of bull-baiting to the House as a moral institution. Another hon. gentleman considered the bill as one of those light and trivial subjects, which was not worthy to occupy the deliberations of parliament, and he compared it to certain bills of a local nature, respecting inclosures, and other disposal of property, which merely passed by chance, as members could not be got to attend their progress. But he would ask, what species of argument was this, coming from a right hon. gentleman who had been always so zealous to impress the country with a due respect for the sentiments of that parliament, whom he this night represented to be utterly inattentive to the disposal of property in distant counties—or what opinion were such arguments likely to impress upon the gentlemen of landed property in those counties? From the speech of the right hon. gentleman, it did not appear that he himself thought the subject of this bill one of trivial consideration. His oration smelt of the lamp; it evinced no inconsiderable share of study and research. "What," said the right hon. gentleman, "will Europe think of the wisdom of this House, when, at a crisis so awful, it is occupied with deliberations on a subject so insignificant as bull-baiting? What will Europe say of us?" Why, whatever they say of us, they must say, that the right hon. gentleman, who seems to think so lightly of the subject, talks as much about it as any of us. But for the feelings of the right hon. gentleman on the subject

Digitized by Google

of bull-baiting, he could account from the state of his mind in consequence of the treaty of peace concluded so much against his wishes. Deprived of the pleasure arising from the sanguinary combats between mankind, and no longer amused by the details of battles and of carnage, the right hon. member turned eagerly to the contests between brute animals; and enjoyed the war between bulls and dogs, as if the restoration of a branch of the Bourbon family was staked on the result. The right hon. gentleman, too, found out that bull-baiting was the only remedy for disconcerting the revolutionary plots of Jacobinism and Methodism; and he extolled the joyous, jovial, and elegant delights of this noble sport, as opposed to the morose and austere spirit of those who condemned it. But if the right hon. member thought the subject of such light and insignificant import as he professed, it would have better become him to treat it with ridicule, than with so much gravity. The right hon. member complained of the magistrates, and their promptitude to put down the favourite sports of the people, and this among the rest. Now there was nothing in which he (Mr. S.) could concur with him more cheerfully, than in condemning the injudicious severity with which the sports of the common people, in many counties were attacked indiscriminately by the magistrates. In the endeavours to suppress the sportof bull-baiting, however, he would give the magistrates every praise for their exertion, convinced that it was the most mischievous of all amusements, and most calculated to brutalize their manners. Some allusion had been made to a project to revive old English diversions in the country. He himself had the honour to be one who, in conjunction with an hon. general (Burgoyne), had formed that project; and he could assure the House, that not only bull-baiting, but every other species of cruel diversion, were expressly forbidden in that project; and the right hon. gentleman, in his zeal for condemning ancient sports, and civilizing the people of England, concluded his speech by threatening to bring in a bill to abolish horse-racing, shooting, fishing, and all other field sports of the higher orders, if this bill should pass into law. But this menace would not have much effect upon the House. Another hon. member had argued, that bull-baiting was not adopted for the sake of cruelty; but he owned he saw no difference that could arise in the fact from the motives of those who pursued this diabolical amusement, as it was called, since the sport arose out of the cruelty; and, notwithstanding the elaborate orations of both gentlemen, he must consider cruelty to brute animals as a crime, whether done for amusement, for sport or for gluttony; and therefore if there were not laws to prevent, if not to punish such cruelties, there certainly ought to be. He agreed that many of the most striking lessons to man were to be learned from animals, but it was fron animals in their natural state and exhibiting their natural qualities. Man derived much of his knowledge from the animal creation.

"Learnt from the little Nautilus to sail,
"And spread the canvas to the swelling gale."

It was not by using craft to make an animal the enemy of another (not so by nature), that instruction was to be obtained; nor where one, trained by the artifices of man, attacked another tied to a stake, and deprived of the means of defending himself. What sort of moral lesson was it to the wife and children of the farmer, who sold his bull for the purpose of being baited, to see the poor, simple, harmless animal, which for years they had cherished as a favourite, and learned to look on with affection, tied to a stake, worried by dogs, and his bleeding tongue torn out of his mouth by the roots? But cruelty to the bull was not the only cruelty exercised on these occasions. What sort of moral lesson, for instance, was it to the children of the farmer, who brings his aged bull-bitch, many years the faithful sentinel of his house and farmyard, surrounded by her pups, to prove at the bull-ring the staunchness of her breed? He brings her forward, sets her at the infuriated animal; she seizes him by the lip, and pins him to the ground. But what is the reward from his owner, amid the applauses of the mob, to his favourite animal? He calls for a hedging bill, and, to prove her breed, hews her to pieces without her quitting her grip, while he sells her puppies at five guineas a piece! Another enters his dog at the animal; his leg is broken in the attack. His owner lays a wager that he shall pin the bull near the lip. He calls the dog, cuts off his leg, then sets him at the bull, which he pins; and having thus won the wager, he is whistled back by his grateful master, who, while he licks his hands, generously cuts his throat. These were some of the hopeful lessons of morality which were to

Digitized by Google

be taught by bull-baiting! It seemed it was a royal sport in the days of good queen Bess; but, though great the courage and prowess of those days, the conduct of our soldiers and sailors, in the late war, exhibited no great degeneracy, notwithstanding the melancholy decrease of this admirable school of morals and bravery. Though the sport should be dignified with king's plates, and gold collars for bull-dogs, he never could be taught to believe that courage would be learned from the exercise of cruelty. If he wished, under the mask of friendship for the people, to make them servile, he would teach them to be cruel. If he wished to induce them to submit to a system of government by barracks and bastiles, he would encourage bull-baiting. If he wished to make them submit to a "vigour beyond the law," he would recommend bull-baiting. If he wished them to see with apathy and unconcern their friends "killed off," he would teach them to inflict cruelties on animals, to oppress the weak, and to abuse their power and superiority; for those who were taught to abuse their own power, were the first to submit to it in others. It had been said, that the laws were already sufficient to prevent the abuse of the practice of bull-baiting. If that had been the case, there would not have been petitions stating the want of efficacy in the law. There were things which were nuisances, and yet the law was inadequate to the suppression of them. Some things were nuisances, because they were *contra bonos mores*—others were unlawful, because they were *malum in se*—others because they were *malum in loco*. Corydon and Phillis might do that in a shady retreat, which it might not be right to do in the pit of the opera-house. A man might walk about in his own closet without clothes on; but it would not do to lounge in Bond-street in the costume of our primitive parents. You might put birds and animals eyes out in private, no one could prevent you; but it would not do to have an exhibition of such a nature at the top of the Haymarket. The only question was, whether, if bull-baiting were abolished, there ought to be an end of all sports? He maintained the contrary: he could discover no cruelty in other sports. He knew that sportsmen uniformly wished to avoid wounding birds. If cruelty followed their sports, it was against their will; but bull-baiting was the only diversion that arose from a desire of cruelty. If the old law upon this subject was worn out—if it had not teeth to hold, let the legislature set about pinning it down by a younger and more vigorous law. He trusted the gentlemen who opposed the bill would find themselves in a small minority; in his opinion, if they were not, it would be a disgrace to the House.

Mr. *Dent* replied. As for the petitions, all those which called for the suppression of this savage amusement, were signed by respectable persons in the neighbourhood of the place from whence the petition came. The solitary counter-petition was obtained by the influence of a young attorney on some of the lowest of the rabble of his neighbourhood. As for the lower class of people, they were sufficiently quiet, if let alone; and he never recollected to have heard a speech which was of a more Jacobinical tendency than the warm appeal to the vulgar prejudices of the rabble, which had been made that night. As to the cruelties which had been exercised in this horrid sport, he could prove that they infinitely exceeded what had yet been described; he could prove that persons had wounded the animal in the tenderest parts with knives, and then poured aqua fortis into the bleeding wounds, in order to provoke the beast to madness.

The question being put, "that the bill be now read a second time," general Gascoyne moved as an amendment, "that it be read a second time this day three months." The question being put, "that the said bill be now read a second time," the House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Mr. Sheridan	51
	Mr. Dent	
Noes	General Gascoyne.....	64
	Mr. Windham	

So it passed in the negative. After which it was ordered, that the said bill be read a second time upon this day three months.

Mr. Canning's Motion respecting the Cultivation of the Island of Trinidad.] May 27. Mr. *Canning* rose, to bring forward his promised motion respecting the cultivation of the island of Trinidad, and said:—Mr. Speaker; circumstances, which I do not think it necessary to trouble the House with explaining, have prevented me from taking any part in the important discussions which have lately occupied

Digitized by Google

parliament. But although, by these circumstances, and by the feelings arising out of them, I have found myself precluded from expressing, even by my vote, the opinion which I certainly have formed upon the general subject of the treaty of peace; yet, that treaty being once concluded, and having received the sanction of parliament, whatever may be my private opinion of the peace, there is but one duty, for every member of this House, and for every good subject of this kingdom, to endeavour, as far as in him lies, to make the best of the new situation in which the country is placed by it, to turn to the best account the advantages which are left to us; and in that view to push, as far as it is capable of going, the improvement of those valuable acquisitions, which, from among the numerous and brilliant conquests of the war, we have been fortunate enough to be able to retain.

I do assure the House, that it is with this view, and in this spirit, that I have presumed to solicit their attention to one of those two important acquisitions, the island of Trinidad. I will not deny or disguise that my attention was first and most forcibly drawn to this island, by the connection which one possible mode of cultivating and improving it necessarily has with a subject upon which I have, in common with a large proportion of the community at large, felt very strongly; I mean the African slave trade; the enormous increase of which, if the whole island of Trinidad should be to be brought into cultivation by imported negroes, must be such as to appal any man who looks at it, and such as must shock this House when it considers its own recorded opinions upon that subject. But though this was the first point of view in which I considered Trinidad, I should do great injustice to the cause which I have undertaken, if I were not to aver, that, in examining into the subject with this view, I have found reason to be convinced full as strongly that the cultivation of Trinidad, in the manner to which I have referred, is not more directly forbidden by the fear of that danger and that shame which would attend the enormous extension of the slave trade, or rather the creation of a new slave trade for this express purpose, than it is by every consideration of the security of the colonies, and of the true policy of this country, under the present circumstances of the world.

It will appear from what I have said, that if any gentleman came hither with the expectation of hearing a long discussion on the subject of the slave trade considered by itself, he will find himself, perhaps not disagreeably, mistaken. I have no desire, and it is not at all necessary for my object, to go into any such discussion. All that I wish to prove upon that subject I find already established by much more satisfactory authority than any reasoning of mine could afford, the votes of the House of Commons. I shall assume upon this subject nothing but what the House of Commons has affirmed and recorded. If any gentleman supposed that it was my intention to depreciate the value, or obstruct the improvement of Trinidad, he is equally mistaken: I wish to improve it more effectually, and to greater advantage than could be done by the old system; I wish only to prevent your throwing away the opportunity of an improvement essential not only to the immediate value of this one acquisition, but to the safety of all your old possessions in the same part of the world. Lastly, Sir, if any one could imagine that my object was to create embarrassment to the present administration by the proposition which I am about to submit to you, I know not how I can better refute such an imagination than by declaring, which I confidently and conscientiously do, that had the same opportunity, the same necessity I should rather call it, for discussing the modes of cultivation applicable to a new island in the West Indies, arisen under another administration, under the administration of those who possessed all my confidence, and, exclusively, all my attachment; of those who had the glory of acquiring Trinidad, instead of those who have had the prudence to retain it: I should equally have thought it a duty, unless the subject had been previously taken up by the government, or by abler hands than mine, not to let the first session of parliament, after Trinidad had become the property of the British crown, pass away without calling the House to the consideration of some such proposition as I have now the honour to submit to you. I trust this will be deemed a satisfactory answer upon this point. If not, I have no professions to make, I have nothing more to add, but that I do feel myself to be discharging my duty, and that, for the discharge of a duty, I presume, no apology is required.

I may perhaps hear it alleged that

Digitized by Google

there is no necessity, or no justification for the interference of the House of Commons in the present stage of this business. As to the necessity of some such measure as that which I have to propose, the best way of proving it, perhaps, will be, to state shortly the course of the events and observations which have induced me to bring this measure forward. Not long after the signing of the preliminaries of peace, a paper was circulated, not only in the city of London, but throughout the Leeward islands, purporting to be a copy of the plan in possession of government, for the allotment and sale of the unclaimed lands in Trinidad; with such a description of the fertility and convenience of the settlement as was calculated to excite the cupidity of monied men, and to lead to the expenditure of a great sum of British capital on that speculation. I do not say that this plan was circulated by government, or with their knowledge; but from whatever quarter it came, it certainly agreed entirely with the papers which government have since produced to the House of Commons, or rather these papers are but an imperfect, though, as far as they go, a faithful abstract of the plan so circulated. About the same time a sort of notice was given in this House by the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer, of an intention to raise a sum of money (no matter for what purpose—the purpose specified is now otherwise and unobjectionably provided for), by the sale of uncleared lands, the property of the crown, in the West Indies. Putting these two circumstances together, I could not but be struck with their coincidence, and I took the earliest opportunity that the meeting of parliament after the Christmas recess afforded, to ascertain, whether or no there did exist such an intention respecting the island of Trinidad, and whether parliament was to be apprised of the plan, and to have an opportunity of considering it before it was carried into execution? I received no assurance that such an intention did not exist; but I was distinctly told, that if such a plan was in agitation, it would not be thought necessary previously to submit it to parliament. It seemed to me that there remained but one course to pursue—to call the attention of this House to the subject; which I have accordingly done; and unless the House of Commons means to abandon its own pledges and duties altogether, it will not refuse to entertain the proposition which I have to submit to its consideration.

As to the right of this House to entertain such a proposition, if it shall see it good, that surely is not easy to be disputed. Parliament has been called upon by the executive government to consider the whole of the treaty, by which, in compensation for many valuable restitutions, Trinidad is ceded to this country. Parliament has been invited to acknowledge its value, to congratulate upon its acquisition. It appears to follow, by a consequence scarcely necessary to be argued, that parliament has the right to ascertain the value which it acknowledges, and to deliberate how best to establish and improve the importance of that acquisition upon which it has offered its congratulations to the throne; above all, that it has a right to implore of the throne that this acquisition shall not be employed in a manner directly to contravene and render nugatory resolutions which this House has formerly passed, and wishes which it has expressed to the throne, and which the throne has graciously received. And if the necessity or the right exist at all, this is the stage of the business in which alone our interference can be effectual. Wait till the sale and allotment of lands in Trinidad is actually made, and the thing is past your power; the mischief is done—and you can only regret, fruitlessly, that you did not interfere sooner.

This brings me to state precisely the object of my present motion. My object is delay only: I wish to prevent the immediate, and, as I contend, the improvident disposal of the lands of Trinidad, in a manner that must completely frustrate the views of the House of Commons, until parliament shall have had an opportunity of examining and discussing the subject. I wish to keep the subject within the power of parliament. I do not propose to you to decide any thing now, one way or the other: I only entreat of you not to suffer it to be made impossible for you to come to the decision which may be right hereafter. I do not touch any thing that exists: I have nothing to do with the slave trade, as far as it is now carried on for the supply of our already subsisting establishments in the West Indies; I have no thought of invading or endangering the vested interests of the West India proprietors: just the contrary; I am persuaded I shall show that what I have to propose is calculated to strengthen and

Digitized by Google

secure them. I entreat gentlemen, therefore, to put out of their minds the abstract question of the slave trade, and all the discussions and feelings which belong to it; I entreat them to consider this question in its true light, as a new question arising out of a new state of things in the colonial world, and as one which it would become us equally to consider, whether the old slave trade were to exist or to be abolished, or to be partially restrained. Whatever may be the fate of the existing slave trade, the question of creating a new slave trade for the cultivation of new land in a new colony, is fit matter for separate discussion; and the question of, whether this be the only, or the best mode of turning the island of Trinidad to good account? is one which it becomes us seriously to investigate, and to investigate now. When grants or sales have taken place, it will be too late. There will then be vested interests to set up, in bar of any decision upon the subject of this new slave trade; or those individuals who vest their property in Trinidad, in the hopes of the slave trade being confirmed to them, will have to complain that the contract of government is broken. I wish government to keep its faith; I wish the House of Commons to preserve its character; and this can only be done by pausing to examine, before Trinidad is hastily put out of their hands.

The object of the motion thus defined, there are naturally two distinct branches into which the considerations belonging to it divide themselves. First, how far is the House pledged not to adopt any measure that may tend to create a new slave trade, and how far is the cultivation of Trinidad, in the manner proposed, likely to interfere with those pledges? Secondly, what is the best account to which Trinidad can be turned, in every view of colonial and national policy? To prove what were the recorded opinions and pledges of the House, Mr. Canning desired that the resolution of the House of Commons, of the 2nd of April 1792, "That the slave trade ought to be gradually abolished," should be read; and also the address of that House, of the 6th of April 1797, praying, "That his majesty would direct such measures to be taken as should (among other things) gradually diminish the necessity, and ultimately lead to the termination of the slave trade;" together with his majesty's gracious answer to that address, "That he would give directions accordingly." [They were read accordingly.]—Before he proceeded to comment on votes of the House of Commons, it would perhaps be expedient, as there were many members of the House who might not have assisted at the passing of them, shortly to notice their history.—The first of them, the resolution of 1792, was moved by a right hon. friend of his (Mr. Dundas), who was certainly never supposed to be indifferent to the interest of the colonies, or to the utmost practicable extent of colonial cultivation. Yet such was the spirit in which this resolution was conceived, so far was the framer of it from having any view to the laying a new basis for the trade in slaves, by bringing new land into cultivation, that it was expressly stated by him as part of his plan, to appoint a commission to ascertain the losses which actual West India proprietors might sustain from being prevented from bringing uncleared land, already their private property, into cultivation; so strictly was it intended to guard against any increase of the slave trade by an increase of cultivation. The address of 1797 was as little the fruit of enthusiasm and wild speculation: it was moved by an hon. friend of his, now near him (Mr. Charles Ellis), himself a West India proprietor, and acting in this instance, as he was sure his hon. friend would readily acknowledge, as the representative and organ of the whole body of West India proprietors in parliament. The object of this address was, to give to parliament and the country the assurance that the West Indians themselves laid claim to the continuance of the slave trade only till such time as they should be able to continue their cultivation on the then existing scale without it; not to increase the slave trade beyond its actual bounds, still less to uphold the principles or defend the justice of it; but, on the contrary, to give a pledge of their desire gradually to diminish, and ultimately to abolish it, whenever that could be done consistently with those vested interests which they conceived to be guarantied to them by the faith of parliament and of the country. Such was the object of that address; and the benevolence and ingenuousness of the character of him whom they selected to bring it forward, were undoubtedly the best securities that could be offered to the House for the sincerity of those who promoted and those who concurred in it.

Digitized by Google

—I appeal, then, to my hon. friend (said Mr. Canning), whether or not, on the principle of the address which he then moved, he does not feel himself bound, and not himself only, but all those whose sentiments he spoke, and all whose concurrence he obtained on that occasion, to vote in support of a measure, the object of which is not only strictly conformable to the spirit, but falls much within the letter of his address; which goes not even to diminish the old slave trade, but to prevent a fresh one from being instituted, more enormous in its extent, and more aggravated in its evils? I appeal to those moderate men who supported that address of my hon. friend, and the resolution of 1792, which I before referred to, who hailed that proposition (the resolution of 1792) as the first moderate practical measure which had been brought forward for the sanction of parliament, as equally remote from enthusiasm on the one hand, and from a cold-blooded, hard-hearted approbation of a trade, "to the horrors of which," as they emphatically said, "no words could add," on the other hand;—I appeal to them whether they can withhold their assent,—I desire them to tell to me on what principle they can withhold it,—from a proposition, which is moderate even in comparison with their moderation; which does not injure a hair of the head of the existing slave trade, leaves it to be abolished as gradually as they please, but only prevents a new and rival slave trade from arising, to cross and blast their benevolent intentions. I appeal particularly to those among them who, when the period at which the slave trade was to be made to cease altogether was under consideration, voted either for the year 1796, which was carried, or the year 1800, the longest period to which any man then ventured to propose prolonging its existence; with what face they can stand up and defend a plan for cultivating a new island with new importations; a plan which must make the beginning of the nineteenth century, not the period of the extinction of the slave trade, as they fondly voted it, but the era of its revival, of its new birth, the date from which its warmest and most anxious admirers may cease to fear for its mortality or decay.

I have said, that the motion which I have to propose goes on different grounds from any other that has heretofore been submitted to the deliberation of parliament. It certainly sets out with great difference of circumstances in this respect—that if there be consistency in man, those persons who have been the most violent opponents of every former measure for the restriction of the slave trade, are bound to support this; the moderate men, and the West Indians. To the West Indians, indeed, I have still other arguments to address,—those of their interest, which are manifestly in my favour; but for the present I am contented to appeal to their consistency. There remain, then, but two classes of persons from which I could apprehend any difference of opinion: the first a small, I hope, and select class, those who admire the slave trade for itself, who deem of it, as Cicero did of virtue, that it requires only to be looked at to be beloved.—"Quæ si videretur incredibilem amorem excitaret sui." With men holding that opinion I can have no argument. It requires a degree of fellow-feeling to be able even to differ in discussion to any purpose. One must settle at what point the difference begins; but such persons must have their minds altogether so differently constituted, their sentiments, affections, and passions must be so unlike any thing that I can conceive, that I avow my incapacity to understand them, and my despair of making them understand me. To their opposition, therefore, I must make up my mind; but I trust to theirs only.—The other class to which I have alluded is one whose opposition I should be concerned to have to encounter; that of those with whom from the beginning I have cordially agreed in opinion respecting the necessity of abolishing the slave trade. I trust it will not be felt by such persons, that the proposition which I offer, because a modified is an unsatisfactory one. I know that in minds of a sanguine cast such a feeling is sometimes apt to prevail; that partially to redress a grievance is often erroneously conceived and represented as giving sanction and establishment to all that part which you leave as you found it; and that this feeling is sometimes even carried so far as to rejoice in any increase of the grievance, from the notion that it must ensure and accelerate the total remedy. But this doctrine is surely to be received with some qualification. First, indeed, it may possibly be true, where those who are to bear the ill, and those who are to administer the remedy, are the same persons.

Digitized by Google

Then I can understand an enthusiastic observer saying of those who are labouring under oppression, from which they might free themselves, but will not, "I am glad that they are made to feel still more; grind them harder still, and let us see if they will at length be roused to resistance." But is this the sort of case which we are now to consider? Is this the road by which alone we look to arrive at a remedy? God forbid! There is yet another consideration; that of degree. If the augmentation of evil would accelerate the remedy in such a degree as that the proportion of evil incurred in the whole would be less than if you had acquiesced in partial redress, at the risk of leaving what was unredressed to last the longer, there might be some ground for rejecting partial measures; but is not this at best a hazardous experiment?—and may not the augmentation of the evil be so great, in the first instance, as that no man would be justified in consenting to it on so precarious a hope of ultimately hastening the remedy. Let us see then what is the degree of increase to the slave trade which will be occasioned by bringing Trinidad into cultivation, according to the plan in the papers on your table?

The right hon. gentleman here entered into a statement, from the papers before the House, of the quantity of land remaining to be granted in Trinidad, in order to form some estimate of the number of negroes that would be required to bring it into cultivation. "There remained to be granted 2,720 allotments of land, of 320 acres each, amounting in all to 876,400 acres; of which near one half, or 420,000 acres, were stated to be fit for the cultivation of sugar. He particularized this, because the sugar cultivation was that which required so much the greatest proportion of negro labour, that it in fact might be taken as regulating the importation. From the same authority it appeared, that the estates already granted (by the Spanish government, for no grant had been made since the island came into the possession of the crown of Great Britain) were in number 400. The quantity of each estate was not specified in the papers on the table, but from authority on which he relied the more, as he had found it correct in every particular where those papers afforded the means of comparison, he was enabled to state that the whole amount of the land in cultivation was somewhere about 34,000 acres, or not quite one twenty-fifth of what remained to be granted. On the island, in this state of cultivation, were employed, according to his information, confirmed in this respect by the papers on the table, 10,000 negroes. The simplest way then of ascertaining the number required to cultivate the remainder, would be to multiply the number already in the island by twenty-five. The result was 250,000. This calculation, however (large as it might appear to gentlemen), was less than would be found to be the result of a comparison of Trinidad with the island of Jamaica. In Jamaica, in the year 1791, there were about one million of acres in cultivation, of which about 350,000 in sugar (the remainder in the minor staples, coffee, cotton, &c. and in provision grounds, &c. for the supply of the sugar estates); Jamaica at that time contained upwards of 250,000, perhaps nearer 300,000 negroes. The proportion of sugar cultivation being taken in each instance as the criterion of the requisite negro population, it would hardly be thought an exaggerated statement, if when Jamaica, for 350,000 acres of sugar, employed, say only 250,000 negroes, he considered only the same number as required for 420,000 sugar acres in Trinidad. In fact, he might assume a much larger number; and for the data on which he proceeded with respect to Jamaica, he desired to observe that he relied for the most part on the statements of Mr. Bryan Edwards (a gentleman, of whose memory he meant to speak with great respect, and of whose support to the present motion, had he been still living, he should have felt himself very confident, so much impressed was that gentleman with the conviction that the system of negro colonies had been pushed already to an extent beyond which it could not go without imminent danger). He took Mr. Edwards's statements, though certainly below the truth, in respect to the negro population, in preference to those of the report of the privy council, which would have justified him in a much larger calculation; both because Mr. Edwards's being lower, he was the less liable to a suspicion of exaggeration in choosing them, and because, being before the public, there was the better opportunity for every gentleman who wished it, to follow him in his deductions, and to correct him if he was wrong. 250,000, then, was the least amount of negroes required for cultivating the pro-

Digitized by Google

jected allotments of Trinidad. But was this all? Nothing like it. The question was not as to cultivating only, but as to clearing and bringing into cultivation, into sudden cultivation, if the whole were to be disposed of, according to the plan in contemplation, to the best bidder at one time. It had required a century and a half to bring Jamaica to its present state of cultivation. But was it to be supposed that at the present day, with such a command of capital, with the spirit of enterprise so much alive, Trinidad would be brought into cultivation so gradually? But in this gradual progression, what was the amount of the importations from Africa which had been required to cultivate Jamaica? Of this, for a certain portion of the time, for eighty-seven years, from the beginning of the last century, Mr. Edwards gave a statement, which he (Mr. E.) averred to be correct. In the year 1673, the negroes in Jamaica were 9,400 in number, within a trifle the same number that the papers on the table assign to Trinidad. In the year 1791 they amounted to 250,000, the number required for Trinidad. From the year 1700 to 1787, the numbers imported from Africa amounted to 610,000. In Jamaica, therefore, there had been required a recruit of 610,000 (without reckoning any thing for the years preceding 1700, or subsequent to 1787), in addition to the natural increase upon the island, to bring up a population of 9,400 gradually to 250,000. Add to this computation the immensely increased mortality from pushing the cultivation of Trinidad with the rapidity with which it would be pushed by purchasers anxious to turn their capital as quickly as possible; add the waste of lives in clearing new lands (the most unwholesome and destructive part of the agriculture of the West Indies), and from employing newly-imported and unseasoned negroes (another infallible cause of aggravated mortality); and if with these additions he were to assume one million of negroes as the lowest amount that would be to be imported from Africa before Trinidad was as effectually cleared and cultivated as Jamaica, he was persuaded that he could not be accused of exaggerating the calculation. One million of human beings to be swept from the face of the earth! And for what purpose?—to gratify what interest?—to comply with what necessity? There was no pretence of necessity; and the interests which had in all former instances been associated with the continuance and extension of the slave trade, in this instance were entirely the other way; he meant the interests of the established West India planters.

He had before said, that if he failed in his appeal to the consistency of the West Indians, who brought forward the address of 1797, he could successfully appeal to their interests. But he would not suppose that he had failed: he believed, he might say he knew them to be ready to redeem their pledge, to stand the test of that day's vote. He would, therefore, direct his argument respecting their interests, not to them, but to those gentlemen unconnected with the West Indies themselves, who had yet always made West Indian interests the plea and pretence for their votes in favour of the slave trade. This day afforded a test of their sincerity also. Was it indeed true, that they had always hitherto been compelled to give a reluctant consent to the continuance of the slave trade, only because they felt themselves bound in justice to take care that the vested interests of the colonists should receive no injury by a hasty abolition? Did they endure an evil they abhorred, only because its continuance was indispensably necessary for the protection of an interest which they regarded? What then would be their plea now? now that the interests of the established West Indian was to be prejudiced by the very same act that created an enormous extension of the evil? now that the only effect of increasing the slave trade by the cultivation of Trinidad would be, to raise up rival establishments to meet the old colonists in the market?—But, perhaps, such a rivalry was rendered peculiarly desirable by some change which had taken place in the state of the markets at home and abroad, by some dearth of West India produce, which must be remedied, by some sudden inflammation of West Indian prices which must be reduced by the necessity of raising a revenue from sugar beyond what it at present afforded! These would indeed be poor justifications for the abandonment of principles so broadly stated, and for the forfeiture of pledges so solemnly recorded. But what was the fact? Precisely the reverse in every particular. The quantity of West Indian produce in the home market far beyond the demand; the markets of Europe shut against us; the prices, in consequence,

Digitized by Google

so low as to be almost ruinous to the planter; and the duties so far from being likely to flow into the exchequer in greater amount, that they were now obliged to be bonded. He did not mean to say that all this might not change and right itself in time; that the markets of Europe might not re-open, the glut find vent, and the prices rise; but he applied his argument to the now state of things, to the existing interests of the present race of West Indians, of those whose immediate interests had always been found powerful enough with the House to defeat all measures for the diminution of the slave trade; and he must ask, when those same interests were found in opposition to the increase of that evil, by what arguments they were to be prevented from having the same effect? Would you increase the slave trade, would you prejudice the West Indian interest, in order to feed a market already glutted, to lower prices already ruinous to the seller, and to swell a revenue which you are already obliged to bond? In truth, said Mr. Canning, there is now no pretence of interest, none of necessity, in favour of an increased cultivation of West Indian produce, at the price of an increased slave trade. If we consent to the increase of the slave trade for such a purpose at this moment, we do an act not only of voluntary wickedness, but of individual injustice.

It may be asked of those who have, at different times, rejected the plea of West Indian interest when urged in favour of the slave trade, how it happens that they now become the advocates of those interests? For this plain reason, that our hostility was always directed against the slave trade, not against the interests connected, or supposed to be connected, with it. And very happy I am, for one, that an opportunity has occurred of putting our sincerity, in this respect, to the test. For myself I can truly say, that if the greatest possible degree of affection and esteem for individuals be a tie of respect and regard for the body to which those individuals belong, there is no body of men to whom I am less likely to feel any thing like personal hostility than the body of West India proprietors, as there is none which contains individuals whom I love and value more highly. But when their supposed (or, as I should say, mistaken) interests came in competition with a great moral and political good, I did not give them the preference. True. But when I find them on the same side, shall it not be an additional incitement to me to endeavour to work that good which now involves, not opposes, the interests of that body of men?—Let us now apply the same test to those moderate men who have hitherto supported the West Indian interest and the slave trade together. As long as they went together, all was well. The slave trade was to be tolerated, because its ally, the West Indian interest, was to be supported. But the alliance is now dissolved: the West Indian interest points one way, the slave trade another. Which will you follow? No disguise; no equivocation now. It is not slave trade *and*, but slave trade *or*, the old West Indian interest that you must support:—slave trade in all its naked charms, without the cloak of a pretended West Indian interest to hide them. If, in this choice, you take that road which leads to the enormous increase of the evil which you pretended to deplore, and abandon the interests for whose sake alone you pretended, while you deplored, to endure it, what shall be said? What can be believed, but that your affected tenderness for the colonists was all mere hypocrisy; and that at all times, in all periods of the discussion, while regard for colonial interests was on your lips, the secret devotions of your heart were paid to the slave trade? Or will it be avowed, that at the time when these professions were made, we were, indeed, sincere in intending to act up to them, but that we did not then foresee the temptation to which we should be exposed; that we were prepared for common exertions of forbearance; we could have suffered a corner of an old island to lie waste, without thinking too much of the sacrifice to consistency; but that the present temptation is beyond our strength; the fine black mould and watered savannahs of Trinidad hold out incitements which flesh and blood cannot resist, and almost justify a breach of our bond, of which flesh and blood, God knows to what amount, must pay the penalty? Sir, I consider the acquisition of Trinidad in a different light. It seems to me as if Providence had determined to put to the trial our boasts of speculative benevolence and intended humanity, by putting into our power a colony where, if we pursue our old course, it must be purely for its own sake, without the old inducements or the usual apologies. This day is a day of tests: I trust we shall all abide the trial.

‡

Digitized by Google

He now came to consider the second division of the subject. In a wider view, and considered as in relation to the general security and stability of our colonial system, and to the national policy of the country, how far would it be prudent to convert Trinidad at once into a sugar colony, to be cultivated by the same means with the others, subject to the same dangers, and partaking of the same weakness and insecurity? Was it possible to look at the present state of the colonial world without feeling considerable awe and apprehension? The struggle now subsisting in St. Domingo, whichever way it might terminate, could not but be productive of great evil and danger to our colonies; in the one event a great moral danger, if the negroes should not be thoroughly subdued; in the other case, of complete success to the French arms, a great military danger. In either of these events, what was the use to which it would be most desirable to have turned our new acquisition? Would the moral danger be best guarded against by having established a new negro colony, by immense importations from Africa? Would the military safety of Trinidad be best ascertained by a population from which, in the time of attack, you would have as much to dread as from the enemy; a population which, while you defended it with one hand, you must keep down with the other? He would not dwell upon these topics, because he was aware that they were too delicate to be agitated much at large in public discussion. But enough surely appeared to any reasoning mind, on the first glance at the present situation and prospects of the West Indies, to prove beyond doubt, that strength, not sugar,—that to fence and support, not to extend, with proportionate extension of weakness, our possessions in that quarter of the globe, was the obvious dictate of policy, was equally necessary for the preservation of the colonies, whether to themselves or to the mother country. In Trinidad, therefore, above all things, we ought to look for strength and solidity; we ought to make it, in the first instance, a strong military post, a naval station, a place of recruit and refreshment for our fleets and armies. It ought to be used not as a new venture upon a speculation already hazardous and overloaded, but to protect and ensure those which we have already at stake. Wealth, to be sure, was strength to a certain degree, inasmuch as it furnished the means of exertion; but to protect the existing sources of the wealth which we now enjoy was the first object, to widen the channel in which it was to flow might be a proper and desirable object hereafter. Strength once established, wealth would naturally follow; but if, with a blind and mistaken cupidity, we hurried on to increase the produce of our colonies, without previously adding to their security, the result might very probably be, to lose even that of which we are already in possession.

If, in looking to the state of the colonies a few years ago, and foreseeing the dangers to which they are now exposed, one had been to form a wish for that which should be most essential to their preservation, he knew not what more he could have desired than that which now the chance of war had thrown into their hands; an island, such as Trinidad, fertile in its soil, with opportunity of naval station, and so situated in respect to the other colonies, as to afford, under most circumstances, the means of quick succour and assistance; and, above all, not so far gone in the old slave trade system, but that a new mode of colonization might be tried there with fair probability of success. Had he formed such a wish, and had any person less confident in the wisdom of parliament than he was, remarked to him at the time, "You shall have what you desire; an island precisely such as you describe shall fall into your hands; but, mark my words, no sooner will you be in possession of it, than all your fine schemes of wholesome colonization will be abandoned; you will turn to your commercial dictionary, and there finding, under the head West India island, the word sugar, and under sugar the word slave, you will look no farther; sugar cultivation and slave trade will comprise the whole of your boasted policy, and Trinidad will be cleared and cultivated by labour from Africa, like all your other settlements, and brought, as quickly as possible, to the same state of wealth and of weakness that belongs to them." Had any man ventured to predict that such would be the only use to which an acquisition like Trinidad would be converted, he should have resented the insinuation as utterly unfounded. He should have abjured for parliament, and for the government of the country, so poor and vulgar a notion of policy as that of, under all

Digitized by Google

the changes of moral and political circumstances, pursuing exactly the same system of colonial establishment, without reference to what might be required for new security under increased danger. "Government," he should have said, "will not be blind to the new circumstances of the colonies and of the world. They will see that internal strength is that which is wanting to their colonial system. They will endeavour to procure it by laying the basis, in their new colony, of a natural population, which is alone the great cure for all the evils that are suffered, and all that are apprehended in that quarter of the world." This was what he should have ventured to undertake for on the part of any government of this country; and this was what he now called upon the House of Commons to do their part towards performing, by interposing to prevent an immediate alienation of the lands of Trinidad.

If he were to be asked by what means he thought a natural population could be procured, he would answer, first, by not introducing an artificial one; by not pouring the population of Africa into the forests and morasses of Trinidad, to perish yearly, and yearly to be supplied by fresh importations. This system once adopted, it was hopeless to look for any other. Keep clear of this, and it was possible that the foundation of another system might be laid. The second means were also negative. Do not make large grants or sales to great capitalists. Look for your settlers among classes of men who will be induced to become residents in the island. Such might be to be found among the meritorious soldiers of regiments on West India service, among foreign corps, among free blacks and creoles in the other islands; to all of whom encouragement should be held out by grants of land, such as would enable them to subsist themselves and their families in a state of moderate independence. If it were objected that European labour was altogether incompetent to the climate; he answered, for the cultivation of the great staple commodities of West Indian produce, certainly; but not for raising vegetables; not for breeding cattle; modes of agriculture which might make Trinidad the source of health and comfort to the soldiers and sailors of Great Britain employed in the defence of the West Indies, and, in some measure, to the colonies themselves.

But neither were these all the materials for settling the island. There were, if he was not much misinformed, other materials peculiar to Trinidad. There was a race of labourers in the habit of resorting annually to that island from the neighbouring continent, to work for hire in the most arduous and fatiguing branches of colonial husbandry. They were called Peons; stout, active, inured to the climate, and capable (as was supposed) of being induced, by proper encouragement, to come over in still more considerable numbers; and, no doubt, if proper means of subsistence were afforded them, to settle themselves and their families in Trinidad. From this race might be created a hardy native militia, fitted, to a degree that European constitutions perhaps hardly ever attain, to endure the fatigue and difficulties of West Indian warfare. The right hon. gentlemen below him (the ministers) had better means than he could be supposed to have, of knowing how far the description which he had been giving of these persons was correct; but he had no doubt of it, and if true, there was a basis for creole colonization, which he should be extremely sorry not to have tried to the fullest extent. The advantages to be derived from it, under certain possible circumstances in the political state of South America, were incalculable; but such as in this place it would not be proper to dwell upon in detail.—There was, besides, another race peculiar (he believed) at this moment to Trinidad, native Indians, to the number (according to the papers upon the table) of about one thousand; a people whom, if it were from no better motive than curiosity, he should be sorry not to have carefully preserved, *reliquiæ et danaûm*, the remnant of nations among whom the sword, and the spit, and the rack, and the mine, had made such horrible ravages. These whom, by some unaccountable oversight, the Spaniards had neglected to exterminate, might, and would no doubt keep an increasing native population. One thousand, to be sure, was not a great number; but it was not contemptible, as a source of colonial inhabitancy: it was as large as the number of whites on some of the smaller islands, it was one-seventh part of the whole population of Trinidad (exclusive of negro slaves) when the island came into our possession, and it bore a proportion of almost one-seventieth part to the whole European population of all our islands put together.

Digitized by Google

Add to this, that the numbers of the sexes were pretty equal (the females rather the more numerous), and there was little reason to apprehend that this race might not be kept up and extended to a very considerable degree.

Now, Sir (said Mr. Canning), I do not say here is your colony established: but I do say, here are means and chances for the establishment of a guiltless, bloodless colony, which it would be highly perverse and criminal to throw away untried, from a blind preference to the old method of annual importation from Africa, with such accumulation of misery, and such risk of mischief as must attend them. Let me not be answered that all experience is against me; that there is no instance of a West India island having been cultivated except by negro slaves. I will not too hastily believe that there is any region in the earth on which Providence has laid that heavy interdiction, that it shall not suffice to produce its own inhabitancy, that it cannot be fertilized except by the blood of victims from another quarter of the globe. I deny the fact, that experience is against me. Has the experiment of a native population ever yet been tried, and failed? Never. Try it now—try it before you make its impracticability a plea for establishing a system of guilt and rapine, which, even if every other resource should fail, is detestable; and if it has not that excuse, if it is not tried in the last resort, is as wanton as it is shocking to humanity. That in this way you will not get as large a produce of sugar to swell the Custom-house entries of the next few years, I grant you. But are you to raise a sum of money, or to found a colony? Would you lay a foundation for the returns of a twelvemonth, or for the greatness of an age? I hope, the latter. Nor, however, will Trinidad yield nothing in the mean time. Many of the means which I have pointed out are applicable to raising colonial produce in its common acceptation. But Trinidad has yet other facilities which make it sufficiently valuable, even if not a hogshead of sugar should be produced, nor the hand of a negro employed upon it. Look at its situation in respect to the Spanish Main. Is it possible that the court of Spain, in making such a cession to us, should not have considered well the policy of its present restrictions on colonial commerce, and of the encouragement to clandestine trade which arises out of them? Is it improbable that the result of such a consideration, aided by the suggestions of the government of this country, should be, to produce a freer intercourse and a more liberal system of commercial regulations; and in such case what advantages might we not expect from Trinidad becoming the emporium of British and South American commerce? There are yet other advantages which do not depend on foreign co-operation. It has been matter of constant dispute between the colonists and those who have in this country contended for limitations on the slave trade, whether or not such improvements might be made in the colonial agriculture, as would diminish the necessity for importations of labourers from Africa. The colonists have said, with some justice, that they *would* be willing and desirous that the fact should be ascertained; but that they cannot afford to hazard a year's returns in trying experiments. Here then is the opportunity of trying them at the expense, not of individuals, but of the public. Who knows what skill and machinery might do to lessen negro-labour? The first consequences to the other colonies would be gradual improvement, by the silent operation of example, without the shock of innovation, or the risk of loss; the further and more enlarged consequences would be, a gradual abolition of the slave trade produced without any other interference, by a gradual diminution of the demand for slaves; a diminution, in a still greater degree, of the great and dangerous disproportion of blacks and whites at present in the islands; a saving of British capital, and an economy of human life. These are not slight advantages, nor would Trinidad be ill employed, if turned to this account only. But this I do not ask you now to decide. I ask you to pause, to allow yourselves time for deliberation. I ask you only not to decide that you will try nothing but slave trade. If in the end you must come to that, if you are determined to do so, should every thing else fail, Africa is always at hand: you can never be too late in your resort to the market for her miserable inhabitants. But you are not justified in resorting to it till you have tried, I do not say all the means I have suggested, but all that wiser and abler men, thinking deeply, and devoting themselves to the subject, can devise; and if tried heartily, depend upon it such means will not fail.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Canning concluded with saying, that he had now only to add, by way of explanation of a single paragraph in the address which he was about to move, that he had been desirous of providing against the only practical objection to which he could conceive his motion to be liable, by excepting from the general prohibition of grants or sales of new lands in Trinidad, such grants as government might wish to be able to make to those inhabitants of the colonies, restored by the late treaty to the French and Batavian republics, who were desirous of remaining under British protection. To them he would leave it open for government to make grants; but to them under condition of not cultivating those grants by negroes imported from Africa. He went on the presumption that they would be allowed, under the stipulations of the treaty, to bring their negroes with them from their present establishments to Trinidad. He would only further observe, that the restriction which the address went to propose, was only to keep the subject open until parliament should have had an opportunity of considering it fully, and to ensure that the government should lay it fully before them. He then moved, "That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, humbly to represent to his majesty, that, in consideration of the great importance of preventing the dangers and mischiefs which must arise from the excessive increase of the importation of negroes from Africa, if such importation should be permitted, without restriction into the island of Trinidad; and for the purpose of avoiding any color or pretext, by reason of new grants, to obstruct hereafter any regulations which, to the wisdom of parliament, may, after due investigation and deliberation, seem expedient; his majesty's faithful Commons humbly request his majesty, that he will not authorise any grants or sales of new lands in the island of Trinidad, without express condition (under penalty of forfeiting and making void such grants or sales), that no negro to be thenceforth imported from Africa shall be employed on the said lands, until opportunity shall have been afforded to parliament to make such provision as the circumstances of the case may be found to require, for the prohibition, limitation, or regulation, of the importation of negroes from Africa into the said island:—That his majesty will be graciously pleased to give directions, that there shall be laid before this House, in the next session of parliament, an account of any such conditional grants and sales, as may have been made in the interval; and of the means which have been employed or provided, for enforcing the due observation and performance of the said condition;—And that his majesty will be graciously pleased further to direct, that there shall be laid before this House, so soon as the same can be prepared, such plan of regulations as to his majesty's government may appear most adviseable for promoting the cultivation or improvement of the island of Trinidad; in the manner the least likely to interfere with the wish expressed by this House for the gradual diminution, and ultimate termination, of the African slave trade, and the most conducive to the stability and security of the interests of the colonies, and of the West Indian commerce of this kingdom."

Mr. *Sturges* seconded the motion.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* observed, that before he commented on the speech of the right hon. gentleman in particular parts, he could not forbear saying, that the motion now before the House was not strictly conformable to the expectation which had been formed from his notice; the motion although divested of some parts which he expected to find in it, was one that he could at this time assent to. If he was bound to decide for or against the motion, he should negative it, on grounds perfectly satisfactory to his own mind, and which he trusted would be satisfactory to the House, after he had explained them: as he was not bound to take that course, he should not take it, but he should adopt another more congenial to his feelings. The right hon. gentleman had observed that there was a rumour prevalent (but which, Mr. Addington said had never reached him), that there was an intention to make grants of land, or sales of land, belonging to the crown in the island of Trinidad; and he had expressed an apprehension that the cupidity of monied men would lead them to take advantage of it; and he said that the notice he had given at an early period was connected with this view of the subject. Upon that subject, he said, the uncleared land in Trinidad was not within his contemplation when he alluded to the advantages which this country might derive from grants hereafter to be made. What he had said by way of notice upon that subject, related chiefly

Digitized by Google

to the island of St. Vincent; upon that topic he had only stated, generally, that some means might thence be found to alleviate the pressure arising from the present charges on this country, by applying the proceeds of the sale of lands in St. Vincent's, and other islands in which there was much uncleared lands by certain grants hereafter to be made, under such regulations as, upon a view of the circumstances, might be deemed expedient: but the island of Trinidad was not then in his contemplation. He had long felt a thorough conviction, that it was a wise policy to increase, as much as possible, the White and the Creole population. With respect to the motion, he was sure he spoke the sentiments of several gentlemen in the House, when he expressed a regret that it should be made at this time. He knew there were some who thought that the subject as far as it related to Trinidad, might be taken as an insulated point; but that was not the way in which he viewed the subject; he thought it difficult to make a distinction between this particular part, and that of the general policy of the trade carried on by means of negroes in the West Indies, and therefore did not see how this question could be fairly discussed without entering upon the general question at large. And here he should observe, in passing, that it was a matter of some surprise to him, that a proposition of this sort should be brought forward so recently after the island had come into the hands of his majesty, although the general question upon the trade to which the proposition referred had been allowed to sleep for five or six years. The proposition now before the House, brought with it no recommendation, either to those who thought that the African trade ought to be immediately, or to those who thought it should be gradually abolished; for it was not essentially favourable to either under the present state of things in the West Indies. The House had declared that the slave trade should be abolished by gradual means; and if this proposition ranked under that general principle, he should not oppose it; that was a proceeding to which he was a party, and he adhered to the principle of that measure; it was one to which the faith of parliament was pledged; but this measure had no tendency towards the accomplishment of that object. He did not consider the faith of parliament to be pledged as to the time when the slave trade should be abolished; it was true, that parliament had stated a time when this would take place; but it was to take place by certain means, in which means the views of parliament were interrupted. It was to be accomplished by certain regulations of the trade itself, by introducing a new system into the West Indies: and then, upon the supposition that such system would be adopted, parliament had voted that the slave trade from the coast should be abolished in 1797; but as the system by which that abolition was to be accomplished was not introduced, the effect was not produced; and therefore, in reality, parliament had not forfeited its pledge to the public. He did not see that the present motion had a tendency to further this object; for it did not follow that the slave trade would be abolished, or even lessened, by confining a vote to the island of Trinidad. An attempt to prevent negroes from being imported from the coast of Africa into Trinidad, would be only to insure the carrying on of the trade in other quarters. What he meant was this: that there would be a considerably increased demand for the produce of the West Indies. The productive powers of St. Domingo had long been in abeyance. The demand of the continent would now be more than the present powers of supply of the West Indies could furnish. That must of necessity produce fresh cultivation. During the last eight or nine years, every thing in the way of trade, in this respect, was carried on by British capital and British enterprise, almost exclusively; and the effect of this on our commerce, and also on our maritime strength, was highly favourable to us. British capital and British enterprise were so great, that they would extend to all the islands belonging to foreign governments, as well as to our own. It was said by the right hon. gentleman that the markets were glutted with sugars, &c. But it was to be considered, that France and Holland had long been waiting in hopes of receiving supplies from their own islands. They would want more than they could have from that source. In that state of things, what was the condition of our merchants? They had been looking with impatience for an opportunity of carrying their supplies to the continent: there had not been a channel for our West Indian produce a great while by way of Hamburgh; but it did not follow that the demand for this produce would

Digitized by Google

cease now: on the contrary, that demand would increase, and then our warehouses would find a vent; so that the glut apprehended would be done away. Then, he would ask the House, if it was true that, in the present state of the world, an increased supply of all markets with West India produce was to be produced only by British capital and enterprise, whether it would be wise to adopt this motion now or whether it was likely to contribute to the gradual abolition of the slave trade, to enter into this premature check upon the cultivation of Trinidad? With a view to the gradual abolition of the slave trade, the only view in which he could support it, this measure would actually do nothing. He objected to the application of any principle for the gradual abolition of the African slave trade, that did not apply itself to the whole of the West India islands. The right hon. gentleman wished that means should be adopted for the increase of the population of whites and creoles in the West Indies. Was it possible to accomplish this object by the present proposition? Would there not be great difficulties in making arrangements for those who had been fixed a great while at Trinidad, and those who might recently have arrived there? Besides, negroes might be brought to Trinidad from Barbadoes, St. Vincent, Montserrat, or other places; and it would be impossible to distinguish between them and those who might have been on the island previous to their importation. But there was another objection to the proposition; the effect of it would be to call for negroes from the different West India islands to Trinidad; because, without their assistance, it would be impossible to carry on the necessary trade there; and it would create a chasm in those islands, which could not be supplied but by means of fresh importations from Africa; therefore, the discouragement of importations to Trinidad alone would not answer the purpose in view; for, unless we could discourage importation into all the islands, it was useless to prohibit it in one. What security was there that the chasm which would be created by bringing negroes from other islands into Trinidad, would not be supplied by fresh importations into such islands. It might be asked, whether, according to the view which he entertained of this subject, he should wish to promote an importation of negroes into Trinidad? He hoped he had answered that question already; he could only say, that neither in Trinidad, nor any other island ought there to be an unlimited importation of negroes. He might be asked, what restrictions he had in view? to which he would answer, not such as were applicable to Trinidad alone, but that the true policy of this country extended to a consideration of all the islands. He entertained a hope, that the subject of the slave trade would be taken up in the course of the next session, and considered deliberately upon the principle of a gradual abolition of that traffic; but this he wished to be preceded by an inquiry instituted by that House. The right hon. gentleman had stated, that Trinidad, for the purpose of keeping it in a state of cultivation, would require an importation of 250,000 negroes. Now, according to the best information received by his majesty's government, such an importation would by no means be the effect of countenancing the principle against which the right hon. gentleman had spoken. With half the number of hands, the cultivated produce of that island was double that of any other; in Trinidad, the labour of forty negroes was more than equal to that of 100 in any other island, except Jamaica. The description which he had received of the peculiar advantages of the island of Trinidad had rendered the matter particularly interesting; so much so, that his majesty's government had determined, some time since to send out a commission for the purpose of making a minute survey. This task had devolved on men of great talents and enlightened minds; and whose opinion, after they had enriched their minds with the information which they now looked for would be extremely valuable. They were to make their report upon the subject, and by that report his majesty's government would be considerably guided. No grants had been made up to the period when the last accounts were laid before the House. Positive orders had been sent by government, that no new grants or sales of land in Trinidad should take place without further authority. He hoped that every public encouragement would be given to the population of the whites and creoles; and he could add, that it was the determination of ministers to advise his majesty not to make any grants of land, except for the purpose of providing the means to which he had alluded, until after the report of the commissioners. He could not

Digitized by Google

be expected to pledge himself to lay before the House any plan upon this subject as arising out of the report of the commissioners; but he pledged himself, either to lay before the House his ideas upon the subject, or, what he should like much better, to concur with some other person in bringing the subject before the House. In the hope, that none of the evils which the right hon. gentleman apprehended would arise from a short delay he should conclude with moving the previous question.

Mr. *Canning* said:—If, Sir, the right hon. gentleman had contented himself with making only the latter half of his speech, I should cheerfully have consented to withdraw my motion; because, in the pledges and assurances of the intentions of himself and his colleagues, he has not only given me all that my motion asks, but more. I understand from him, not only that no grants or sales of land shall be made in Trinidad (except such as the address, which I had the honour to propose to you itself excepted), until parliament shall have had an opportunity of considering the subject, but that there is a fixed and serious determination on the part of the executive government, to revise and discuss fully, with the view to a final settlement, the whole of that great moral and political question, which has for twelve years been discussed in this House to so little purpose. With the hopes that are now held out to me of this attention being speedily given to the subject, and having the solemn word of the right hon. gentleman that the object of my motion shall be answered, I am not desirous of pressing it to a division. For the same reason I will not make any of those comments on the first part of the right hon. gentleman's speech, which I think it deserves. I will only observe, that if my motion has had the effect of producing the public declarations and pledges which we have just heard from the right hon. gentleman, I conceive it to have been highly beneficial. I cannot think it so ill-judged or ill-timed as he has endeavoured to represent it. And the right hon. gentleman must excuse me for saying, that it is in consequence of some insinuations and misrepresentations in that speech that I feel it necessary to persist in desiring that the address may be recorded on the Journals.

General *Gascoyne* contended, that it was necessary, for the support of our West India colonies, that the slave trade should be increased instead of being abolished.

Mr. *Wilberforce* observed, that he was satisfied with the personal declaration of the chancellor of the exchequer, believing that he was sincere, and anxious to act up to his professions. Nevertheless, he could not be very sanguine when he considered what had formerly taken place in the House, or even remembered the conduct of the right hon. gentleman himself. The fairest prospects had been held out, and they had ended in nothing. The evil existed now in a greater degree than ever, and daily gained ground. He thought that some steps ought to be instantly taken to prevent the increased importation of negroes into the islands. The effect of threatening to abridge the traffic necessarily quickened it. The British importation of slaves had been much greater during the last three years, than at any former period. The insinuation thrown out, that he had seen with unconcern the immense trade in slaves to the conquered islands, was void of all foundation. He had bewailed the circumstance with the utmost bitterness. He was opinion that our government ought immediately to enter into a negotiation with foreign powers for the abolition of the slave trade. He should bring the subject before the House during the present session.

The previous question was then put and carried.

Debate in the Commons on the Clergy Residence Bill.] May 31. The order of the day being read for the House to go into the consideration of the report of the Clergy Residence bill, sir W. Scott moved the recommitment.

Mr. *Simeon* opposed the principle of the bill. Its grand scope and operation went, not merely to abrogate the salutary statute of Henry 8th, but, on the ruins of that act, to erect a new code of ecclesiastical law, of the most dangerous nature, inasmuch as it went to place an unconstitutional power in the hands of the bishops. The power proposed to be vested in the bishop of the diocese, of granting a dispensation from residence, had a tendency to place all the clergy under the control of the prelacy, and thereby virtually to render them the instruments of the crown. Whatever practical good could possibly result from the dispensation of residence was to be obtained by the existing cano-

Digitized by Google

nical law, without any appeal to the bishop, which only rendered the inferior orders of the clergy dependent upon the diocesan. The difference in the value of money in the reign of Henry 8th and at the present period, might render an alteration of the penalties enacted for non-residence necessary; but surely this could not constitute a reason why the law itself should be abrogated. The difference in the value of money rather made in favour of the continuance of the bill, as the penalty, in its operation, was so much the lighter, in proportion as the value of money had decreased. The original aim of the statute was, to get rid of the corruption introduced by the lavish accumulation of pluralities granted by the pope. In those days, it was no uncommon thing for one clergyman to hold fifteen or sixteen different livings; nine livings were reckoned a mere trifle. The non-resident acts were therefore passed, as a corrective against the evil of pluralities. And in this view, in order that the evil might be more strenuously combated, the bishop himself was liable to be suspended from his function, if he did not strictly enforce residence in his diocese; the canon law, therefore, as it at present stood, was competent to every salutary purpose; and he saw no reason why it should be taken out of the hands of the law, and placed in those of the hierarchy. The House, if they agreed to the power of dispensation, would be legislating in the dark; and, by the passing of such an act, would give to the bishops a new and excessive political influence, which, in its operations, might materially endanger the government of the country. Great stress had been laid on the number of informations preferred against different clergymen within the last twelvemonth; and much declamation thrown away on the character and conduct of a certain person, who had recently started as a kind of reformer against the neglect and remissness of the clergy. He was ready to admit the fact; but what did it prove?—That the evil itself was prodigiously great and frequent, and that proportionably great and strong must be the remedy. Numerous as were the instances of informations lately laid by that person, he had not heard of a single one in which the penalty had been made the instrument of oppression: on the contrary, it was to be regarded merely as the enforcer of the existing law. If, then, penalties were found to be necessary, the House should not take a partial glance, but open its eyes to both sides of the question. One case, and but one, among all the instances which had occurred, carried with it the appearance of hardship, and that was the case of the rector of Bow church; but this he could not help considering, with all deference to the judgment of the eminent person who tried the cause, as a misapprehension of the law. He begged he might not be misconstrued, as putting his judgment against that of the noble lord who presided on that occasion; a more intelligent, upright, and enlightened mind never graced the bench. But still he was of opinion, that had the question been argued in the House of Lords, where it would have undergone more minute and laboured discussion, a different verdict would have been returned. The law provided penalties against wilful, but not unavoidable neglect of residence; and surely, where the parsonage-house was proved to be unfit for residence, the clergy could not be deemed, in law and equity, obnoxious to the penalties of non-residence. In Watson's Reports, it was expressly laid down, that in such case the clergyman would be indemnified from any penalty. He could never give his assent to a mingling of the sacerdotal and secular character. Nothing could tend more effectually to degrade the ministerial function. At the same time, he wished to be understood as not combating the limited right of farming, as far as was necessary to the support and comfort of the clergyman's household. But he saw no reason why any new law should pass on this head, as the existing laws made ample provision for the cultivation of the parsonage glebe, with the liberty of taking more land into cultivation, if the necessities of the clergyman's household required it. But, beyond this, he could not agree to the doctrine of a clergyman meddling with secular pursuits. By his ordination vow, he was expressly restricted from engaging in mundane occupations, in order that he might the more assiduously devote himself to the duties of his calling. What more could any man desire? Did they wish to see the clergy transformed into farmers; the parsonage-house into a magazine; and corn, turnips, and potatoes, retailed by the minister of the parish, instead of the pure and wholesome milk of the gospel? Was there a man in that House, who would wish to secularise the clergy to such an extent as

Digitized by Google

that? He wished the question, therefore, to stand on its true and proper basis, that of residence. As the House had proved itself jealous of its rights, and had recently come to a determination, that no clergyman could hold a seat in that House, and superintend the concerns and interests of the inferior orders of the clergy, he thought it incumbent upon them to be careful that they did not put the inferior clergy too much in the power of the bishops, and subject them to a degrading influence. It was one thing to have the liberty of doing a thing as a matter of right, and another to have the permission as a matter of courtesy. The existing laws of the country, were fully competent to the correction of abuses. Why could not the enforcement of those laws be left to a jury, without throwing additional influence into the hands of the bishops, by giving them the option of dispensation? With such a law as this before his eyes, no man would educate his son for the church. He wished to see the church firmly established upon the true basis of its original principles; and, therefore, he deplored the fate of those clergy who had to contend with all those sensations which enlightened minds must feel from their humiliated and impoverished state. His heart was rent whenever he reflected on the assertions of the learned civilian (sir W. Scott), that out of 11,000 benefices, no less than 5,000 produced not more than 50*l.* a-year. As often, then, as he adverted to this afflicting consideration, it was not the non-residence of the clergy that penetrated his mind, but the neglect that these deserving persons suffered, and the effect which that must have on society. In his opinion, government should apply 40,000*l.* or 50,000*l.* yearly in aid of queen Anne's bounty, to be divided among these deserving but neglected people. He was not sure of success in the opposition he had given to the bill; but he should be consoled with the reflection, that he had performed his conscientious duty to the utmost of his ability.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that the attention of the House was not so much called to compel the residence of the clergy, as to prevent them from being persecuted by informers. Numerous discussions had taken place, as to the best method of doing this; and the House at length agreed to suspend the existing law, until a system could be formed for effectually regulating those proceedings which had become a ground of complaint, and had been made an instrument of oppression. To effectuate this purpose, his right hon. friend had framed a bill. The measure had been called for by the House; and the question was, whether the House would not now entertain it? He apprehended, that, nothing short of a radical objection to the whole of the principle of the measure could be an adequate inducement for voting against the motion. He knew it to be matter of regret with his right hon. and learned friend who brought forward this measure, that he had not yet had an opportunity of bringing forward a measure for the improvement of the condition of the inferior clergy. As to any pecuniary grants that could be made to them, he believed there never was any thing applied by parliament more worthily than that would be. Taking the clergy as a body their conduct was such as called for the esteem of the country. This was a matter of great importance to the society in which we lived; and when this object was gained, we should then have gained a lasting security for our general happiness; but without that, he was convinced it would be impossible for our prosperity to be lasting. He felt this opinion so forcibly, that he would say, great as our wealth was at the present hour, great as our prosperity was as a nation, splendid as our military and naval glory had been, much as distinguished men had spread our fame, yet, unless we had a clergy possessed of competence, and superior to pecuniary wants and the inconveniencies of indigence, the whole of our successes and triumphs would, in time, be trodden under foot, and it would be in vain for us to look for a long period of happiness. He approved of the bill as far as it went. He wished the provision, with regard to the clergy, extended farther than this bill professed to go. Future provisions might embrace considerations of increasing places of public worship, as well as increasing the salaries of some of the ministers of that worship. He hoped the House would go into the committee, and see what could be done with the bill.

Mr. *M. A. Taylor* said, he could not vote for going into the committee. He thought that some further provision should be made for the clergy. This, however, formed no part of the bill; and he could not consent to take from juries what had been in their hands for so long a period, and give the power which they

Digitized by Google

exercised wholly to the bishops. The present measure was not an amendment of the statute of Henry 8th, but a complete repeal of it. He well knew that many of the bishops were pious and excellent men; but it was not merely to the present, but to future bishops, that this power was to be given; and to no set of them would he consent to give the power which was conferred upon them by the present bill. Why were not twelve jurymen as good judges whether an action ought to be maintained against a clergyman or not? Another ground of complaint against the statute of Henry 8th, was, that the penalty was not equal, it being the same upon clergymen possessing livings of 3,000*l.* and those of 100*l.* a year. To this a remedy might be applied; but if the bishop was to give a licence for non-residence, there was an end of the action. If these objects were to be remedied, why not bring in a bill to amend that act? He would admit that ordination, and various other ecclesiastical functions, ought to be placed under the control of the bishops; but did it follow, that the residence of the clergy should also be under their control? Who paid the clergy? The laity. If the bishop was to have the control over residence, it amounted to this, that the bishop was to decide whether a parish which paid 500*l.* a-year to a minister was to have one or not. He believed the bill was very unpopular amongst the clergy; they would rather the statute of Henry 8th should be amended, than be compelled to go to a bishop for a licence for non-residence.

The *Master of the Rolls* said, that no law could be so badly executed as that which was in the hands of common informers. The object was to take from them that discretion which they had abused, and to place it in the hands of those to whom it properly belonged, the venerable prelates. It was said, that the statutes had existed for two centuries and a half. He was as little disposed as any man to place untried theory, in competition with laws and customs of which they had experienced the benefit; but although the statute of Henry 8th had existed so long, they had not had above ten years experience of its effects; and when enforced it had only been so through the will and pleasure of a common informer. He could have no objection to substitute something instead of it; but was it not worth while, after witnessing its consequences, to try whether they could not go on without it? Even supposing that suing for penalties in a court of law, to enforce residence was an efficacious mode, yet it certainly was degrading. The object of the bill was to try whether the discipline of the church could be carried on by means of the constitution of the church. If it failed, they had it in their power to go back to the statute of Henry 8th.

The *Attorney General* wished the bill to go into a committee, that the clauses might be altered. If it came out of the committee in the same form as it went into it, he certainly should oppose it. It had been said, that many cases of great hardship had arisen in consequence of the power given to the common informer by the statute of Henry 8th, but he believed there was more clamour made upon this subject than the occasion warranted. It had been said, that the act of Henry 8th, even if enforced, would only compel the clergyman to reside upon his living; that it would not compel him to a faithful performance of the duties of his function; but this was only saying that the act did not do that which it never professed to do. The act professed to enforce residence, and no more. But gentlemen argued as if the act of Henry 8th took away the superintending power of the bishops over the residence and conduct of the clergy; it did no such thing. It would not be denied, that, the bishops had now by law the power of enforcing the residence of the clergy upon their livings; but it might be urged that the means by which the bishop could enforce residence were troublesome and expensive, and therefore could not be had recourse to. It was also to be observed, that the means of compelling residence under the act of Henry 8th was expensive to the common informer because there were no costs.

Mr. *Windham* said, that the object of this bill was partly to regulate the statute of Henry 8th by certain provisions. Now, he should have liked it better if it had tended to repeal that statute. Discretion was inseparable from all law. Now the discretion here was given to the bishops, and it was to operate on the inferior clergy: this was a discretion the least to be objected to, since it was in the nature of the discretion of a parent over his child. He therefore thought the discretion properly directed; and that the church

Digitized by Google

should have the means of regulating its own concerns within itself. This had been the practice of ancient times, and was still the practice of other countries. He was a friend to the measure, because it tended to keep the discipline of the church within the church, and lodged discretion where it was right to lodge discretion. As to the point of enforcing the residence of the clergy, the question was, how far it was wise to do things by halves? It was admitted, that the statute of Henry 8th if enforced in full rigour, could only enforce the residence of the clergy; and therefore he would say, the provisions of that statute were worth but little; it reminded him of the power of the groom, who could lead the horse to the water, but could not make him drink when he came there, So here, by the statute of Henry 8th we would compel the clergy to come to their parishes, but could not compel them to perform the functions of their order: so that, by this statute, we had the disgrace of a restriction without any certainty of benefit.

The House then went into the committee, in which the bill underwent a variety of alterations.

June 9. Sir *W. Scott*, after lamenting the slow progress of his bill, said he had given it his best attention, and was anxious to learn the opinions of others. The bill was now much superior to the one formed according to his own crude conceptions. However, he should not press the bill farther this session in the hope that it would be revived at an early period of the next.

Debate in the Commons on the National Debt Reduction Bill.] April 14. The House having resolved itself into a committee on the acts relative to the Reduction of the National Debt,

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that he should at present do little more than move the four Resolutions which he held in his hand. He could not, however, forbear saying a few words respecting the principles on which they were founded. No man could feel more than he did the importance of the obligation we were under to preserve inviolate the system for the redemption of the national debt which was adopted in 1786. Of all the measures that were ever adopted by parliament, no one was more entitled to the admiration of the present age, or the gratitude of posterity. The leading features of the measure he had to submit was that of a consolidation of the public debt, and of the means to be adopted for the purpose of its reduction. It was impossible to look at the interest of the capital of our debt, without feeling a desire to discharge it, with the least possible pressure upon the public. It was impossible to look at the amount of the capital of that debt, without feeling the utmost anxiety, and an earnest desire to accelerate the period of its extinction. The amount of the taxes annually to be raised and permanent, was now about 30,000,000*l.* The capital of our debt 488,000,000*l.* The committee would recollect that two measures were adopted for the purpose of reducing our debt; the one in 1786, the other in 1792. The first was for the purpose of reducing the debt by the operation of a fund of one million at compound interest, to a given time, when the amount of it should be four millions. The other was for providing for the discharge of one per cent of every sum thereafter to be borrowed and added to the capital. By the first, it was provided, that at a given period, when the amount of the funds in the hands of the commissioners should be 4,000,000*l.* the interest of that 4,000,000*l.* should be at the disposal of parliament, and the plan of the former accumulation should cease. His proposition was, to prevent that pause in the operation taking place, and to go on with that fund, together with the interest to attach to it, with all the advantages and power of compound interest. With respect to the measure of 1792, the operation of that fund also for the discharge of one per cent of the whole sum borrowed since that period, he proposed to carry on with the other fund, for the purpose of the extinction of the whole debt. By the operation of these two funds, the probability was, that the whole debt would be paid off in 43 years and two months. That of itself would induce the committee to receive the plan with readiness, and examine it with alacrity. But this was not all: for the plan obviated the necessity which would otherwise arise, of providing 900,000*l.* taxes immediately, to provide for the operation of the one per cent fund of 1792, and also leave a sum little short of 1,500,000*l.* the difference of the interest when the 5 and the 4 per cents should be paid off, a measure which he believed likely to take place at no very remote

Digitized by Google

period. He should now read his Resolutions. They were as follow:

1. "That it is the opinion of this committee, that the amount of the annual sums applicable, under the acts of the 26th and 32nd of his majesty, to the Reduction of the national debt, as the said sums stood on the 1st of February 1802, if consolidated into one sinking fund, with the additional sum of 200,000*l.* per annum, and continually applied at compound interest, but without the addition of any sums arising from annuities which may expire, or from savings of interest on annuities which may be reduced, would redeem the whole of the existing capital of the national debt, including the capital to arise from the loan of the present year, within forty-five years from the present time, and in a shorter period than the whole of the said capital would be redeemed by the separate application of the said annual sums respectively, together with the additional sum of 200,000*l.* per annum, as well as of one per cent on the capital to be provided for in the present year, and of any other sums which would, by virtue of the said acts, become applicable to the discharge of such capital.

2. "That the additional sum of 200,000*l.* per annum be granted to his majesty, from and after the 5th of January 1803, to be vested in the commissioners appointed under the said act of the 26th of his majesty.

3. "That it is expedient to provide that the amount of the annual sums applicable under the acts of the 26th and 32nd of his majesty, to the reduction of the national debt, as the said sums stood on the first of February 1802, should be consolidated into one sinking fund, with the additional sum of 200,000*l.* per annum, and be continually applied at compound interest to the redemption of the whole of the existing capital of the national debt, including the capital to arise from the loan of the present year.

4. "That any sum which may arise from annuities which may expire, or from savings of interest on annuities which may be reduced, shall be applicable to the public service, in such manner as parliament shall direct."

May 17. The House having again resolved itself into a committee on the acts relating to the Reduction of the National Debt, the first Resolution was read,

Mr. *Boyd* said, that, by the mode now proposed, an advantage would be gained over the old sinking fund of 115,000,000*l.*

Mr. *Pitt* said, that upon the best consideration he could give the subject, he was inclined to think it would be nearer 150,000,000*l.*

Mr. *Tierney* said, it appeared to him, that if the country were soon placed in a state of war, difficulties would arise; but that if we continued in a state of peace for forty-five years, the plan proposed would be productive of much greater advantages than the former plan. He wished that calculations might be made with different views of the subject, in order that they might be sure they were accurate.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* contended, that though the plan would not be productive of immediate advantages, yet that the effect would be within a given time to promote the liquidation, and ultimately to produce the extinction of the national debt.

Mr. *Pitt* said, that the effect of the plan would be to improve and invigorate the sinking fund, and enable the country more effectually to support any struggle in which she might hereafter be engaged. The annual saving of 900,000*l.* must form a powerful resource against the exigencies of any future war. There certainly would be a period in which the debt would be less rapidly discharged, than by the old method; the progress in the beginning would be slow. The question then was, the time when the quantity of stock to be bought up, according to the present plan, would be greater than by the old sinking fund? From the best calculation he was able to make, that effect would begin to operate in about fourteen or fifteen years: 15 or 16 millions would then be in the hands of the commissioners, and be applicable to the public service in case of a new war.

The several Resolutions were agreed to, and a bill ordered to be brought in thereupon.

June 3. The House having resolved itself into a committee on the bill,

Mr. *Bankes*, after bestowing the highest praise on the establishment of the sinking fund, which he considered the greatest among all the proofs of high talents which Mr. Pitt had given, begged to make a few observations on the present plan, and particularly on the calculations of

Digitized by Google

comparative effect of the old and new system. Some confusion had with respect to the term "conversion." The consolidation was, in a thing of no advantage in itself, advantage was annexed to it by ing the sinking funds in a different

The advantage of the present ire consisted in one thing only, hat was, the saving of one per cent should have been raised on the or the present year, and on the l borrowed on the income tax. ly hereafter this might be con- d as a great disadvantage, as by it ublic was placed more remote from riod when relief was to be afforded old system. All the advantages ed by the new system, might, in e coupled with the old, by which uld be manifestly in a better situa- or a considerable time. In that here would have been an additional near 900,000*l.* to operate in con- n with the former sinking funds, old sinking fund of 1786 should attained its maximum in 1808. ving of the one per cent on the f the present year operated as a on the measure; but he had great whether it did not take from the advantage of the reduction of blic debt. By taking all the stock no advantage could be had under solidation for 38 years; and taking er cents and 3½ per cents at par, 4 per cents at 75, no advantage e expected within 28 years. The ing fund would attain its maximum , and the new sinking funds, under of 1793, would reach an equality n 1825. There was no doubt that aching the equality the advantages apidly increase; but till then the would suffer materially, as well by ation of the benefits to be derived e supply, after the sinking funds have obtained their maximum, as nterruption of the debt, and the n which monied men might con- a departure from the established of redemption; a suspicion which ender the measure destructive of redit. The calculations on which sent measure was founded sup- hat taking the 3 per cents at 85, and the old debt would be re- in 43 years. By the letter of the debts would be redeemed in 45 nd there was reason to suspect that these calculations so much relied on had over-rated it in taking the 3 per cents at 85; for in the circumstances of Europe there was little reason to hope that stocks would hold their present price for so many years. In six years the system established by Mr. Pitt would afford a sum applicable to the public service of the country, or to the reduction of taxes; a reflection of the most consolatory nature. If the advantages of the present system were coupled with the former, without any drawback, then indeed the measure would be beneficial; and a power and force would be given to the machine which would render its operation rapid and irresistible. Having thought the institution of the sinking fund of 1786 highly advantageous, and that of 1793 equally so; having thought that there was nothing on which the high character and fair fame of Mr. Pitt reated with so much stability, he could not consent to a deviation from them for a momentary advantage, which was to be attended with long and great privations. Conceiving all the advantage that would be derived from the measure to be nothing more than the saving of one per cent on the capital of the loan of the year, the saving by the reduction of interest, and the conversion of higher stock into stock bearing a lower interest, he could not persuade himself that the privations which it brought on the public would be compensated by the benefits which would result from it.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that his hon. friend had observed that the whole of the advantage of the present measure arose from the relief which it would afford to the public, by saving the imposition of taxes in the present year, to the amount of 900,000*l.* He did not think his hon. friend had examined the plan with his usual accuracy. What was the effect of the plan, as appeared from the papers laid before the House? That in a year when taxes to a larger amount than were ever before imposed in any one session there was a disposition on the part of the executive government to recommend a measure, the effect of which was, to avoid an immediate burthen upon the people to the amount of near 900,000*l.* and yet, at the same time, very much to accelerate the reduction of the national debt; and to leave parliament at liberty, in the year 1808, to apply 512,000*l.* the amount of the short annuities that would then

Digitized by Google

fall in. It was also stated, that an additional consequence of that plan would be to leave at the disposal of parliament, in the event of paying off the 5 per cents, 1,500,000*l.* for the reduction of the public debt, or to relieve the people from taxes to that amount. Upon this point particular stress had been laid; and if at this period it should be the disposition of parliament to relieve the people from the burthen of taxes, they might apply the 512,000*l.* short annuities, and the 1,500,000*l.*; there would then be a relief to the people of 3,000,000*l.* and the relief of 900,000*l.* was, besides, immediate. It was not for him to presume how parliament would act in the year 1808; but such would be the state of things when the five and four per cents were paid off. Such were the recommendations of the measure, but was that the whole? His hon. friend had said, that the term "consolidation" was a term of deception in this case, which was certainly not so. The difference between the present plan and that of the sinking fund established in 1786 was this, that, in 1808, when a discretion was to be afforded to parliament of disposing of what was in the hands of the commissioners for the relief of the people in taking off taxes, it was proposed, instead of arresting the progress of this fund, that it should go on until, by the productive powers of compound interest, in conjunction with the other fund, it had worked the discharge of the whole debt; instead of resting at 1808, it was to continue its operation until the whole debt was discharged. What was the system of 1792? By that measure it was provided, that one per cent should be raised on every loan that should thereafter be made, in proportion to the sum borrowed, and which was to operate till the debt which it was calculated to redeem should be discharged, and the surplus to be at the disposal of parliament. The alteration now proposed was, that instead of this being at the disposal of parliament, it should be added to the sinking fund, and that both should go on until the whole debt was redeemed. It appeared under the old plan, supposing the 3 per cents at par, and the 4 and 5 paid off, that the old debt would be extinguished in forty-four years and four months from February last. Supposing the 3 per cents at 75, the whole debt would be paid off in 32 years and 10 months: that under the operation of the system of 1792, the debts incurred since that time would be discharged, supposing the 3 per cents at par, in 45 years and 7 months. Supposing the 3 per cents at 75, the whole of the new debt would be discharged in 35 years and three months. By the consolidated system now proposed, the whole of that debt would be extinguished in 31 years, that was to say, in four years less time than by the plan of 1792, and in three years less than the operation of the plan of 1786 would effectuate its purpose. Supposing the 3 per cents at 75, the effect of this consolidated plan would be, to extinguish the whole of the existing debt in 33 years and seven months; that was to say, the debt existing previous to the plan of 1786. The period allowed by the act of 1792 for extinguishing the debt since, was 45 years; and, if gentlemen would look at the papers, they would find that the effect of the consolidated plan would be, supposing the 3 per cents at par, not only to extinguish near 498 millions, but also to provide for the extinction of near 40 millions more; and, supposing the 3 per cents at 75, the effect of the consolidated plan would be, not only to pay off the whole of the present debt, but also to afford the means of paying off 44 millions. Now he would ask the committee, whether a measure, the effect of which was to afford immediate relief to the amount of 900,000*l.*, and to afford relief, if parliament should choose to avail itself of the opportunity in 1808, of bringing 512,000*l.*, and the 1,500,000*l.* in the manner he had already stated, to the relief of the public in taxes, without retarding the progress of the system of 1786 or 1792? Was this a departure from the system of 1786 or 1792? [Here Mr. Addington proceeded through the calculations in the printed papers.] This plan would extinguish the national debt in a much shorter period than the former plan, and afforded relief for the payment of 900,000*l.* taxes. It afforded means also for supporting the finances of the country, in the event of its being engaged in war.

Mr. *Tierney* observed, that, whatever hostility might exist between him and the author of the sinking fund, he had always admired the wisdom of that plan, as well as the ability with which it had been carried into execution. The right hon. gentleman should however take care that he did not destroy all that had as yet been beneficial in the operation of the sinking fund. He had considered all the advan-

Digitized by Google

tages which he stated would be obtained by his plan, as fair gain arising from this change. This was an error; for the gain was in reality very little. If the stocks were taken at par, all that would be gained by the measure was 1,090,000*l.* If taken at 75, it would be only 790,000*l.* He did not wish to see a measure of this kind adopted by a sort of side wind. An enquiry ought to be instituted, to see whether this departure from a plan which had been generally approved was necessary. In his opinion, nothing could excuse it but the pressure of circumstances. With regard to the calculations, he believed they were drawn up with great accuracy; but it was not in the nature of things that they could be relied upon. Calculations of this kind might indeed be depended upon for four or five years; but what security was there that public events would permit the operation of the measure to go on progressively? It was not just to postpone paying any part of the public debt which had been contracted under the guarantee of the acts which created the sinking fund. In another war the sinking fund would be worth nothing. Monied men, finding they had once been deceived, would not be so ready to contract for loans again. No future scheme, therefore, could be expected to have so great an effect as that which was about to be abandoned. It might, perhaps, be allowable to take from the public creditors, whose claims existed previous to 1786, the advantages which they would derive from the application of the sinking fund; but it was unjust to take that advantage from those who had advanced their money on the faith of that plan.

Mr. *Thornton* said, that to depart from the ancient system, for the purpose of adopting the present measure, was in no degree a violation of public faith. His objection to the measure was rather of a political than of a financial nature. It seemed to him that we were only postponing our difficulties. He would rather see rapid advances made in the course of a few years hence, than a pledge given for futurity.

Mr. *Boyd* said, that a great part of what Mr. Tierney had said against the present measure, turned upon the distant period in which the plan would operate. He had never till now heard that the credit of the country, or the faith of parliament, was to be estimated by periods of time: he had never understood that there existed in this country such a spirit as led to occasion any difference in point of confidence, where the faith of parliament was pledged, whether it was confined to four years or forty; and the whole financial transactions of the country warranted the assertion. Had not many large sums been borrowed on long annuities of 60 and 70 years? And had they ever been under-estimated because of their long duration? No, the public credit of the country would always find its level, whatever the period of time might be in which that credit might have to operate. An hon. gentleman had alluded to something like deception having arisen from the terms "consolidated sinking fund." Not only no such deception had been practised, but none was ever intended to be practised. The plan stood upon too solid and broad a basis to require such assistance. Much had been said about the measure being calculated to throw upon posterity burthens which the present age should bear. This was not a correct state of the case. Not one single shilling would be borne by posterity which the present day did not bear. It was the object of the bill, to lay the same burthens equally on both, until the whole debt was discharged.

The bill then went through the committee, and was reported; and passed the House on the 11th.

Mr. Tierney's Finance Resolutions.] June 17. Mr. Tierney rose to submit his annual Resolutions respecting the State of the Public Finances. He said, he wished them to be laid on the table, printed, and discussed on a future day.

The Resolutions were as follow:

FINANCE RESOLUTIONS.

1. That the amount of the public funded debt, on the 1st Feb. 1793, was 238,231,248*l.* exclusive of long and short annuities for lives, to the amount of 1,373,550*l.*; of which sums, stock, to the amount of 10,242,100*l.* had been purchased by the commissioners for redeeming the national debt, and the annuities, to the amount of 79,880*l.* had fallen in, and been carried to their account, reducing the actual amount of the debt on the 1st Feb. 1793, to 227,989,148*l.* and the annuities to 1,293,670*l.*; and that, on the 1st Feb. 1802, stock, to the amount of 39,865,308*l.* had been purchased by the commissioners, and stock, to the amount of 18,001,148*l.* had been transferred to them on account of land tax redeemed, and annuities, to the amount of 125,707*l.* had fallen in; reducing, on the 1st Feb. 1802

Digitized by Google

the actual amount of debt existing before the war to 180,344,792*l.* and the annuities to 1,247,843*l.*

2. That the total amount of stock created since the 1st Feb. 1793 (including the amount created by sums borrowed in the present session of parliament, and after deducting 20,493,003*l.* purchased by the commissioners for redeeming the national debt) on the 1st Feb. 1802, is 338,138,360*l.*; of which sum the interest on 7,502,633*l.* is payable by the emperor of Germany; and the interest on 22,348,000*l.* is payable by Ireland: And that annuities have been granted since the 1st Feb. 1793 to the amount of 550,460*l.* of which 9,791*l.* is payable by Ireland, and 230,000*l.* by the emperor of Germany.

3. That the total amount of the public funded debt (including the amount created by the sums borrowed in the present session, and after deducting 60,375,311*l.* purchased by the commissioners, and 18,801,148*l.* transferred to them on account of land tax redeemed) was on the 1st Feb. 1802, 518,483,152*l.*; of which sum 29,064,226*l.* is on account of Ireland and the emperor of Germany; leaving a funded debt charged on Great Britain of 489,418,926*l.*: And that the amount of annuities charged on Great Britain (after deducting what have fallen in) was, on the 1st Feb. 1802, in short annuities, and for lives, 543,300*l.*; and in long annuities, 1,015,410*l.*

4. That, under the heads of treasury, army, ordnance, barracks, and advances from Civil list (after deducting the surplus of ways and means of 1801) outstanding demands, as far as the same can be made up, remained to be provided for, on the 5th Jan. 1802, to the amount of 3,264,235*l.*: That the unfunded debt in exchequer bills, unprovided for, or provided for out of funds which have proved insufficient, was, on the 5th Jan. 1802, 13,744,443: That the debt of the navy remaining to be provided for, was, on the 5th Jan. 1802, 9,073,070*l.*; and, that the total amount of demands outstanding, navy debt and exchequer bills unprovided for, or provided for out of insufficient funds, was, on the 5th Jan. 1802, 26,081,748; of which sum 11,771,836*l.* has since been made good out of the supplies of the present session, leaving an unfunded debt of 14,309,912*l.* to which 5,000,000*l.* of exchequer bills, voted in the present session, being added, makes a total of unfunded debt hereafter to be provided for, of 19,309,912*l.*

5. That the total debt may be stated as follows; viz.

Total Amount of the Public Funded Debt unredeemed	£.518,483,152
1,015,410*l.* Long Annuities, valued at 25 Years' Purchase	25,385,250
Unfunded Debt	19,309,912
	563,178,314
Of this sum, Ireland and the Emperor of Germany are chargeable with the Interest on	29,064,226
Leaving a Total Debt charged on Great Britain exclusive of 543,000*l.* Short Annuities, and any farther sums necessary for winding up the expenses of the War of	534,114,088

6. That the sum applicable to the reduction of the total funded debt was, on the 1st Feb. 1793, 1,427,143*l.*, and, on the 1st Feb. 1802, 5,809,330*l.* to which must be added 26,390*l.*, being 1 per cent on part of the loan of the present year; making a total of 5,835,720*l.* of which sum 5,587,399*l.* is applicable to the reduction of the debt charged on Great Britain, and, being appropriated by act of parliament to accumulate at compound interest, will redeem a sum equal to the amount of debt created since the 1st Jan. 1800, in about 16 years, supposing all stocks to be purchased at par, and in about 12¼ years, supposing the 3 per cents to be purchased at 75.

7. That the annual charge incurred by the permanent debt, on the 5th Jan. 1793, was 10,325,866*l.*, including 1,000,000*l.*, applicable to the reduction of the debt:—That the annual charge incurred by the permanent debt created since the 5th Jan. 1793 (exclusive of interest payable by Ireland, and including the charge incurred by the loan of the present session, but exclusive of 48,000*l.* interest on deferred stock) is 13,557,600*l.*, of which sum 2,462,100*l.* is the 1 per cent sinking fund on the capital of the said debt, applicable to the reduction thereof; and that a farther charge of 497,735*l.* per annum is guaranteed by parliament in default of payment of the interest of certain loans by his majesty the emperor of Germany.

8. That the nett produce of the permanent taxes, existing previous to the war, was, on the 5th Jan. 1793, 14,284,000*l.*; and on the 5th Jan. 1802, 13,221,682*l.*: That the nett produce of the permanent taxes imposed since the 5th Jan. 1793 was, on the 5th Jan. 1802, 9,187,288*l.*: And, that the total amount of the permanent taxes was, on the 5th Jan. 1802, 22,408,970*l.*

9. That the total official value of all imports into Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 19,659,358: and, on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 18,685,390*l.*:—That the total official value of all imports, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1802 (supposing the imports from the East Indies, of which no account has been made up, to be the same as in the preceding year) was 32,317,032*l.*; and, on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan. 1802, was

Digitized by Google

)64,036*l.*:—That the total official value of ;ish produce and manufactures, exported he year ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 136,851; and, on an average of six years, ing the 5th Jan. 1793, was 14,771,049*l.*:— t the total official value of British produce manufactures, exported in the year end- the 5th Jan. 1802, was 25,719,979*l.*; and, an average of six years, ending the 5th 1802, was 21,631,050*l.*:—That the total ial value of foreign merchandize, exported from Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 6,568,346*l.*; and, on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 5,469,014*l.*:—That the total official value of foreign merchandize, exported in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1802, was 16,523,480*l.*; and, on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan. 1802, was 14,104,700*l.*

10. That the total sum to be raised in Great Britain, in the year 1802, may be estimated as follows; viz.

rest of the Public Funded Debt, Charges of Management, and sinking Fund, 1 the 5th Jan. 1802, after deducting interest payable by Ireland	22,444,564
rest, &c. to be incurred, and paid, between the 5th Jan. 1802 and the 5th Jan. 803, on stock created by loans of the present Session, to the amount of ,351,375*l.*	665,422
rest on Exchequer Bills, estimated to be the same as paid in the year ending h Jan. 1802	1,121,890
ortion to be defrayed by Great Britain, according to the Articles of Union, of e Civil List, and other Charges on the Consolidated Funds of Great Britain d Ireland, amounting together to 1,560,472*l.*	1,376,888
l Government of Scotland, Pensions on Revenue, Militia and Deserters' War- nts, Bounties for promoting Fisheries, &c. &c. estimated at	1,000,000
ges of Management of Revenue, estimated to be the same as in the year ded 5th Jan. 1802	1,871,861
lies voted for 1802, on Account of Great Britain exclusively .... £.8,409,473	
ortion to be defrayed by Great Britain, according to the Articles Union, of the Supplies voted for Great Britain and Ireland nounting in the whole to 31,259,209*l.*) 27,261,063	
Total Amount of Supplies for 1802, to be defrayed by Great Bri- tain	35,670,536
nce to Ireland	2,000,000
est payable for Loans to Emperor of Germany	497,735
Making in the whole the sum of	£.66,648,896
That the Interest of the Public Funded Debt, Charges of Management, and iking Fund, after deducting Interest payable by Ireland, is	23,520,003
the Interest on Exchequer Bills, exclusive of three millions not at present aring Interest, cannot be estimated at less than	450,000
the Interest on Navy Debt cannot be estimated at less than	150,000
of the present Charges on the Consolidated Funds of Great Britain and Ire- d, the Proportion to be defrayed by Great Britain, is	1,376,888
of the Miscellaneous Charges of Great Britain and Ireland, the Proportion be defrayed by Great Britain cannot be estimated at less than	397,060
the Charges of the Militia of Great Britain cannot be estimated at less than	220,000
of the Charges of Chelsea and Kilmainham Hospitals, and Widows' Pensions Great Britain and Ireland, the proportion to be defrayed by Great Britain not be estimated at less than	262,948
of the Half Pay of the Army of Great Britain and Ireland, the proportion to defrayed by Great Britain cannot be estimated at less than	400,000
	26,776,899
of the Charge of the Navy (supposing the number of seamen employed to be uced from 70,000, their present amount, to 30,000, for the year 1803) the portion to be defrayed by Great Britain cannot be estimated at less than ..	3,514,613
	£.30,291,512

That, supposing the produce of the old permanent taxes to be the same as in the year g the 5th Jan. 1800, being, their highest amount, and the new permanent taxes to pro- he sum for which they were laid, the income applicable to the peace establishment of Britain may be estimated as follows; viz.

	£.
ld Permanent Taxes	15,740,000
ew Permanent Taxes, including 1801	10,395,246
axes imposed in present session	4,000,000
and and Malt	2,558,000

Digitized by Google

Estimated profit on Lottery	360,000
	33,053,246
Which sum, being so raised, after deducting certain estimated charges to the amount of	£ 30,291,512
would leave towards the charge of the Army Ordnance, and contingencies, a surplus of	2,761,734

13. That the actual charge of the Army and Ordnance for Great Britain and Ireland, for six months, ending the 5th Jan. 1803 (exclusive of Army Extraordinaries, Militia, Half-pay, Chelsea, &c.) to be defrayed by Great Britain, is 2,414,876*l*, being after the rate of 4,829,750*l*. per annum.

That, supposing a reduction to take place to the amount of 20,000 men, with a proportionate reduction in the Barracks and Ordnance departments, the total charge to be defrayed by Great Britain for the army and Ordnance (exclusive of Army Extraordinaries, Militia, Half-pay, Chelsea, &c.) may be estimated for the year 1803, at	£ 3,812,960
And that upon such an establishment, the charge of Army extraordinaries to be defrayed by Great Britain cannot be estimated at less than	600,000
Making (exclusive of contingent charges, and of 497,000*l*. Interest due by the Emperor of Germany, and guaranteed by parliament) a sum of	4,412,960
Which, after applying the estimated surplus of taxes	2,761,734
would leave a deficiency to be provided for, of	1,651,226:

The first Resolution being read, the debate thereupon was adjourned to the 25th.

June 25. The adjourned debate on Mr. Tierney's Finance Resolutions being resumed, Mr. Tierney entered into a defence of them, and, after a short conversation, the previous question was moved upon them by the chancellor of the exchequer, and carried.

Mr. Chancellor Addington's Finance Resolutions.] The following Resolutions were then moved by Mr. Chancellor Addington, and agreed to:

FINANCE RESOLUTIONS.

1. That the amount of the public funded debt was, on the 5th Jan. 1786, 238,231,248*l*. exclusive of long and short annuities, and annuities for lives to the amount of 1,373,550*l*.; that, on the 1st Feb. 1793, stock to the amount of 10,242,100*l*. had been purchased by the commissioners for redeeming the national debt, and annuities to the amount of 79,880*l*, had fallen in, and had been carried to their account; reducing the actual amount of the debt on the 5th Jan. 1793 to 227,989,148*l*. and the annuities to 1,293,670*l*.: and that, on the 1st Feb. 1802, stock to the amount of 39,685,308*l*. had been purchased by the commissioners for redeeming the national debt, and annuities to the amount of 125,707*l*. had fallen in, and been carried to their account, and stock to the amount of 18,001,148*l*. had been transferred to them on account of land tax redeemed; reducing the actual amount of debt existing before the war on the 1st Feb. 1802, to 180,344,792*l*. and the annuities to 1,247,843*l*.

2. That the capital of the public funded debt created since the 1st Feb. 1793, as the same stood on the 1st Feb. 1802, together with the capital to be created by sums borrowed in the present session of parliament, and exclusive of 7,502,633*l*. 3 per cent stock, created by advances to the Emperor of Germany, is 351,125,730*l*. That the amount of long annuities, created during the same period is 320,461*l*. per annum, exclusive of 230,000*l*. annuity created by advances to the Emperor of Germany, which will expire in the year 1820. That of these sums, 22,348,000*l*. capital, and 9,791*l*. long annuities, are on account of Ireland, leaving a permanent debt, of 328,777,730*l*. charged on Great Britain. And that on the 1st Feb. 1802, 19,703,596*l*. had been purchased by the commissioners for redeeming the national debt: reducing the said permanent debt, created since 5th Jan. 1793, to 309,074,134*l*. exclusive of long annuities to the amount of 310,670*l*. per annum.

3. That the total amount of the permanent funded debt charged on Great Britain, after deducting the sum of 59,588,904*l*. redeemed by and the annuities fallen in to the commissioners, and 18,001,148*l*. transferred to them on account of land-tax redeemed, was, on the 1st Feb. 1802, 439,418,926*l*. together with short annuities to the amount of 543,103*l*. and long annuities to the amount of 1,015,410*l*.

4. That the sum annually applicable to the reduction of the national debt of Great Britain, in pursuance of the act passed in 1786, was 1,000,000*l*. being about 1-238th part of the capital of the permanent debt then existing; and for 1793, was 1,427,143*l*. being about 1-160th part of the permanent debt existing in 1793, and may, for the year 1802, be

Digitized by Google

mated at 5,800,000*l.* being about 1-84th of the permanent debt existing in 1802; h sum of 5,800,000*l.* is appropriated by of parliament to accumulate at compound est, until the whole of the existing debt scharged; which, supposing all the stocks purchased at par, and no further sums e transferred for redemption of land tax ot be later than the close of the year

That the annual charge incurred on ac- of the permanent debt on the 5th Jan. was 9,297,000*l.* before any fund was ed applicable to the reduction of the debt, on the 5th of Jan. 1793, was 10,325,000*l.* ling 1,000,000*l.* applicable thereto; in sum of 10,325,000*l.* was included, on h Jan. 1793, the interest of 10,242,100*l.* l stock redeemed, and the amount of ties fallen in or unclaimed which had ransferred to the commissioners, making er the sum of 387,143*l.*; and that the um of 10,325,000*l.* was reduced on the n. 1802, by reason of stock transferred emption of land tax, and by diminution charges of management, on account of redeemed by the commissioners, to 69*l.*; in which sum is included the on 39,885,308*l.* capital stock re- l, and the amount of annuities fallen nclaimed, and transferred to the com- ers, making together the sum of 86*l.*

hat the annual charge incurred on ac- f the permanent debt of Great Britain, since the 5th Jan. 1793, including *l.* permanent interest and charge of the present session, of which 17*s.* will not become payable till after Jan. 1806, amounts to 13,597,594*l.* um; of which 10,544,383*l.* is for in- nnuity and charges of management of rt of the said debt as was unre- on the 1st Feb. 1802; and 3,053,211*l.* m 1 per cent sinking fund on the ca- part of the said debt and interest redeemed, and is applicable to the re- thereof; and that a further charge 5*l.* per annum is guaranteed by par- in default of payment of the interest loans by his majesty the emperor of

t the annual charge on account of anent debt of Great Britain, on the 1802 (including 924,199*l.* for interest es of the loan of the present session 00*l.* now permanently added to the nd) amounts to 23,568,763*l.* whereof *l.* is applicable to the reduction of al debt. And that a further charge 5*l.* per annum is guaranteed by par- default of payments of the interest loans by his majesty the emperor y.

the amount of the outstanding de- provided for on the 5th Jan. 1802, f unfunded debt, and of the antici- pation of certain duties annually voted, was 4,514,351: that the surplus of ways and means for the year 1801 was 114,000*l.*; and 99,886*l.* remained unpaid and applicable to the public service on the grant to the queen of Portugal; reducing the amount of demands unprovided for to 4,300,465*l.*; of which 4,018,420*l.* has been provided for in the present session.

9. That the unfunded debt, exclusive of the anticipation in the usual form of certain duties annually voted, amounted, on the 5th Jan. 1793, to 8,925,422*l.* and on the 5th Jan. 1802, to 21,179,170*l.*; exclusive of the anticipation of the loan of 1802, and of 3,000,000*l.* advanced by the Bank without interest for the renewal of their charter, to be repaid in 1806; of which sum of 21,179,170*l.* 10,118,493*l.* has been paid off or provided for in the course of the present session.

10. That the nett produce of the permanent taxes existing on the 5th Jan. 1784, then amounted to 10,194,259*l.*; and that taxes were afterwards imposed to defray the expenses of the war ending in 1783, amounting in 1786 to 928,000*l.*: making together 11,132,000*l.*

11. That the nett produce of the permanent taxes existing previous to the year 1784, adding thereto about 938,000*l.* imposed as above stated in 1784 and 1785, and 137,000*l.* arising from the consolidation act, and from duties imposed in 1789, was, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1793, 14,284,000*l.*; on the 5th Jan. 1794, 13,941,000*l.*; on the 5th Jan. 1795 13,858,000*l.*; on the 5th Jan. 1796, 13,557,000*l.*; on the 5th January 1797, 14,392,000*l.*; on the 5th January 1798, 13,332,000*l.*; on the 5th January 1799, 14,275,000*l.*; on the 5th January 1800, 15,743,109*l.*; on the 5th January 1801, 14,194,539*l.*; and on the 5th January 1802, (including 1,275,544*l.* the amount of bounties paid on corn and rice imported, 14,497,226*l.*; which last sum, after deducting the duties arising from the consolidation act, and those imposed in 1789, exceeds the nett produce of the permanent taxes on the 5th Jan. 1784, together with that of the taxes imposed in 1784 and 1785, by 3,228,226*l.*

12. That the actual nett produce of the taxes imposed since the 5th Jan. 1793, amounted in the year ending the 5th. January 1802, to 9,187,288*l.*: and that the total nett produce of the permanent taxes in the year ended the 5th Jan. 1802, amounted to 23,684,514*l.* (including 1,275,544*l.* paid for bounties on corn and rice imported).

13. That the total gross receipt within the year (deducting repayments, discounts, and drawbacks, and also deducting all loans and monies paid to government) was, in the year 1797, 28,076,179*l.*; in the year 1798, 30,176,303*l.*; in the year 1799, 34,750,976*l.*; in the year 1800, 33,535,016*l.*; and in the year 1801, 35,368,376*l.* being an increase compared with 1797, of 12,292,197*l.*; compared

Digitized by Google

with 1798, of, 5,192,073*l.*; compared with 1799, of 617,400*l.*; and compared with 1800, of 1,833,360*l.*

14. That the official value of all imports into Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1784, was 13,122,235*l.*; and on an average of six years ending 5th Jan. 1784, was 11,690,829*l.*:—that the official value of all imports into Great Britain in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1793 was 19,659,358*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 18,685,390*l.*:—that the official value of all imports into Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1802 (supposing the imports from the East Indies of which no account has yet been made up, to be the same as in the preceding year) was 32,317,032*l.*; making an increase as compared with 1783, of 19,194,797*l.* and with 1792, of 12,657,674*l.*; and on an average of six years ending 5th Jan. 1802, was 26,964,038*l.*; making an increase, as compared with the average of the 5th Jan. 1784, of 15,273,209*l.*; and with the average to the 5th Jan. 1793, of 8,278,648*l.*:—and that the real value of imports in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1802, supposing the imports from the East Indies to be the same as in the preceding year, may be estimated at about 58,800,000*l.*

15. That the official value of British manufactures, exported from Great Britain in the year ending the 5th January 1784, was 10,409,713*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending 5th Jan. 1784, was 8,616,660*l.*:—that the official value of British manufactures exported from Great Britain in the year ending 5th Jan. 1793, was 18,336,851*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 14,771,049:—that the official value of British manufactures exported from Great Britain in the year ending 5th Jan. 1802, was 25,719,979*l.* making an increase, as compared with 1783, of 15,310,266*l.* and with 1792, of 7,383,128*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan. 1802, was 21,631,050*l.* making an increase, as compared with the average to 5th Jan. 1784, of 13,014,390*l.*; and with the average to 5th January 1793, of 6,860,000*l.*:—and that the real value of British manufactures exported in the year 1801, may be estimated at 41,770,000*l.*

16. That the official value of foreign merchandise exported from Great Britain in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1784, was 4,332,909*l.* and on an average of six years ending the 5th Jan. 1784, was 4,263,930*l.*:—that the official value of foreign merchandise exported from Great Britain in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 6,568,348*l.*; and on an average of six years ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 5,468,014*l.*:—that the official value of foreign merchandise exported from Great Britain in the year ending the 5th January 1802, was 16,523,480*l.* making an increase as compared with 1783, of 12,190,571*l.* and with 1792, of 9,955,132*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending 5th Jan. 1802, was 14,104,700*l.* making an increase as compared with the average to Jan. 5th 1784, of 9,840,770*l.* and with the average to Jan. 5th 1793, of 8,636,686*l.*:—and that the real value of foreign merchandise exported in the year ending the 5th January 1802; may be estimated at about 15,750,000*l.*

17. That the number of registered vessels belonging to the British dominions, and employed in trade in the year 1789, being the first year in which the register act had taken full effect, was 14,310; their tonnage 1,395,172, and the number of seamen navigating the same 108,962. In the year 1792, the number of vessels was 16,070; their tonnage 1,540,145; and the number of seamen navigating the same 118,286; and in the year 1801, the number of vessels was 19,772; their tonnage 2,037,317, and the number of men 143,987;—being an increase of 5,462 ships, of 642,145 tons, and of 35,025 men, compared with 1789; and of 3,693 ships, of 497,172 tons, and of 25,701 men, compared with 1792.

18. That the total sum to be raised in Great Britain in the year 1802, may be estimated as follows:—viz.

Interest of Public Funded Debt, Charges of Management, and Sinking Fund, on the 5th of January 1802, after deducting interest payable by Ireland	22,444,564
Interest, &c. to be incurred and paid between 5th January 1802 and 5th January 1803, on stock created by loans in the present session	665,422
Interest on Exchequer Bills	750,000
Proportion to be defrayed by Great Britain, according to the Articles of Union, of the Civil List, and other Charges on the Consolidated Funds of Great Britain and Ireland, amounting together to 1,537,739*l.*	1,356,828
Civil Government of Scotland estimated as before Pensions on Hereditary Revenue, ditto Militia and Deserters Warrants, ditto Bounties for promoting Fisheries, Linen Manufactures, &c. including Excess of Corn Bounties beyond 1,643,000*l.* re-paid by Parliament	1,000,000
Charges of Management of the Revenue the same as last year	2,024,697
Making the total Permanent Charges to be defrayed out of the Gross Receipt of Permanent Revenue	28,241,511
Proportion to be defrayed by Great Britain, according to the Articles of Union, of the supplies voted for 1802 for Great Britain and Ireland, amounting in	

Digitized by Google

the whole to 39,305,344*l.* including therein the separate Charges on Great Britain		35,532,371
		63,773,882
Advance to Ireland	2,000,000	
Interest payable for Imperial Loans	497,596	
		2,497 596
		66,271,478

19. That the gross receipt of the Permanent Revenue, after deducting re-payments for over Entries, Drawbacks, and bounties in the nature of Drawbacks amounted, in the year ended 5th January 1802, to 29,220,536
Estimated Produce, to the 5th April 1803, of the Taxes imposed in the present session of Parliament 3,400,000
That further sums are applicable to the service of the year 1802, as follows:
Repayments from Grenada, Imprests, and Lottery 864,000
And that the remainder of the Supply for the year 1802 is provided for by a Loan on account of Great Britain, of 23,000,000
And a Loan for Ireland, of 2,000,000
And by Exchequer Bills, to be charged on Supplies 1803 5,000,000
And expected additional Produce of Taxes that were deficient in 1801, compared with 1799 1,600,000
Surplus of Ways and Means 1801, and Residue of Grants to the Queen of Portugal 213,886
Interest of Land Tax contracted to be paid for by instalments 25,000
Arrears of Income tax 2,500,000

Making in the whole the sum of 66,821,422

20. That it appears by a report of a committee of this House in 1791, that the actual expenditure (including the annual million for the reduction of the public debt) on an average of five years peace ending the 5th January 1791, and including sundry extraordinary expenses for the armament of 1787, and for payments to American loyalists, and other articles of a temporary nature, amounted to 16,816,985*l.*
But the Peace Establishment was estimated by the said committee, at 15,969,178
With which estimate the actual expense of the year 1792 nearly agreed.
In the above sum was included the Charge of the Public Debt, amounting to 10,325,000*l.* from which is to be deducted the Charge of Stock extinguished by the redemption of Land Tax on the 5th January 1802 540,000

15,429,178

That the additional permanent charge incurred by the debt created since 1793, exclusive of interest payable by Ireland, is 13,597,594
That the additional charge to be incurred for increased amount of Exchequer Bills outstanding, is about 140,000
Interest of money for satisfying increased Navy Debt, at 5*l.* per cent is about 270,000
That the additional charge incurred on the Consolidated Fund is 390,000
That the additional charge incurred for a sum appropriated for the Redemption of the Public Debt, is 200,000
And that the increased expenses of the peace establishment (exclusive of any charges to be incurred by interest on further sums, to be paid on winding up the expenses of the war, and any augmentation which may take place in the Naval or Military establishments, but allowing for increase of pay and other expenses) may be estimated at 700,000

And also exclusive of 497,000*l.* interest on loans due by the emperor of Germany, and guaranteed by parliament may be estimated at 30,726,772

21. That adding to the produce of the permanent taxes in the year ending the 5th January, 1802, the sum of 1,275,544*l.* paid for corn bounties, and the sum of 1,600,000*l.* being the estimated deficiency of certain duties in the same year, the income applicable to the peace establishment may be estimated as follows:

Old permanent taxes	14,497,226
New permanent taxes	9,187,288
Further produce of taxes that were deficient in 1801, compared with 1799	1,600,000
Further produce of taxes, 1801	864,319
Taxes imposed in 1802	4,000,000

Digitized by Google

Land and Malt, after deducting land tax redeemed	2,060,000
	32,208,833

And that a further sum of 45,340*l.* arising from annuities, which will expire at the periods under mentioned, viz.

In 1805	56,554
1806	8,152
1807	15,515
1808	374,119
	454,340

will then also be applicable, as well as such sums as may from time to time arise from the savings on the interest of stock, which may be reduced to a lower rate, and which, supposing the whole of the stocks to be reduced to 3 per cent would amount to 1,491,890*l.* which sums are exclusive of any allowance for the profit of a lottery, or for any participation of the territorial revenues of India.

The Speaker's Speech to the King on presenting the Money Bills.] June 28. His majesty came in state to the House of Peers, when the Usher of the Black Rod was sent to command the attendance of the House of Commons, who soon after appeared at the bar.

Mr. Speaker *Abbot* then addressed his Majesty as follows:

"Most Gracious Sovereign:

"It is my duty to present to your majesty the bills for completing the supplies which your majesty's faithful Commons have granted for the service of the year.

"With heartfelt gratitude they acknowledge your majesty's paternal goodness and wisdom, which have already enabled them to make a large reduction of the public burthens, by the termination of a long and eventful war; a war just and necessary in its origin, conducted with energy, sustained with fortitude, signalized by triumphs surpassing the fame of our ancestors, and obtained in countries unvisited by their arms—and concluded at length by a peace, which has added new conquests to your crown, and given repose and safety to these its ancient dominions, whose Peers and Commons have now for the second year the happiness of being assembled in one United Parliament at the foot of your throne.

"Thus circumstanced, your majesty's faithful Commons not only look forward with a sanguine hope that they may not soon be called to the hard necessity of augmenting the public debt by future burthens, but they have deemed it their duty to look back to the debt already incurred, and with the same characteristic spirit which first laid the foundation of an effectual system for the extinction of the national debt, they have proceeded to arrange and settle a plan for accelerating that extinction, by pledging the future application of their growing means to the accomplishment of the same great object.

"At a time when their attention had been directed to these considerations, and when they have also found that taxes of unprecedented weight, though wisely imposed to meet the exigencies of such a war, might nevertheless be now prudently repealed, it has given the highest satisfaction to your majesty's faithful Commons to relieve those pressing demands which the general difficulties of the times had cast upon the provision assigned by parliament, for the support of your majesty's household and the honour and dignity of your crown: for this country has not now to learn, that its monarchy is the best and strongest security for its liberties, and that the splendor of the throne reflects lustre and dignity upon the whole nation.

"These, Sire, are amongst the memorable events of a session thus far protracted; upon which we reflect with a conscious satisfaction, that to the discharge of great duties we have brought proportionate exertions.

"And we now indulge the flattering hope, that we may safely apply ourselves to cultivate the arts of peace; arts long dear to your majesty, and congenial to the temper of your people, whose spirit of enterprise in foreign commerce, and internal improvement, unexampled in its exertions throughout the war, may now expand itself with redoubled activity; and by providing new sources of strength and wealth for this country, fix the stability of our own power, and at the same time promote the common interests of Europe, and of all the civilized nations of the world."

Digitized by Google

The King's Speech at the Close of the Session.] After the royal assent had been given to the said bills, his Majesty made the following Speech to both Houses:

"My Lords and Gentlemen;

"The public business being concluded, I think it proper to close this session of parliament.

"During a long and laborious attendance, you have invariably manifested the just sense you entertain of the great trust committed to your charge. The objects of your deliberations have been unusually numerous and important; and I derive the utmost satisfaction from the conviction, that the wisdom of your proceedings will be fully proved by their effects, in promoting the best interests of my people throughout every part of my dominions.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons;

"The ample provision you have made for the various branches of the public service demands my warmest acknowledgments; and my particular thanks are due for the liberality which you have shown in exonerating my civil government and household from the debt with which they were unavoidably burthened.

"Whilst I regret the amount of the supplies which circumstances have rendered necessary, it is a relief to me to contemplate the state of our manufactures, commerce, and revenue, which afford the most decisive and gratifying proofs of the abundance of our internal resources, and of the growing prosperity of the country.

"My Lords and Gentlemen;

"As I think it expedient that the election of a new parliament should take place without delay, it is my intention, forthwith, to give directions for dissolving the present, and for calling a new parliament.

"In communicating to you this intention, I cannot suppress those sentiments of entire approbation with which I reflect upon every part of your conduct since I first met you in this place. The unexampled difficulties of our situation required the utmost efforts of that wisdom and fortitude which you so eminently displayed in contending with them, and by which they have been so happily surmounted. From your judicious and salutary measures during the last year, my people derived all the relief which could be afforded under one of the severest dispensations of Providence; and it was by the spirit and determination which uniformly animated your councils, aided by the unprecedented exertions of my fleets and armies, and the zealous and cordial co-operation of my people, that I was enabled to prosecute with success, and terminate with honour, the long and arduous contest in which we have been engaged.

"The same sense of public duty, the same solicitude for the welfare of your country, will now, in your individual characters, induce you to encourage, by all the means in your power, the cultivation and improvement of the advantages of peace.

"My endeavours will never be wanting to preserve the blessings by which we are so eminently distinguished, and to prove that the prosperity and happiness of all classes of my faithful subjects are the objects which are always the nearest to my heart."

On the following day the parliament was dissolved.

FIRST SESSION OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

Meeting of the New Parliament.] November 16, 1802. This being the day appointed for the meeting of the New Parliament, the same was opened by commission, and the Commons being sent for to the House of Peers, the lord chancellor signified, that it was his majesty's pleasure to defer declaring the causes of his assembling the parliament, until the Commons had chosen a Speaker. He therefore desired them to choose a fit person to be their Speaker, and to present him there, for his majesty's approbation, on the following day.

Mr. Abbot chosen Speaker.] The Commons being returned to their House, Sir *William Scott* rose, and addressing himself to Mr. Ley, the deputy clerk, said:—It is with all possible deference to the House, and with the most entire consciousness of the proper modesty of any

Digitized by Google

pretensions of mine, that I am anxious to seize the opportunity of addressing you upon the subject which has been recommended to our immediate attention. The election of a Speaker is the first function of this House in order of time, and is amongst its first functions in point of importance; for it is no less than to designate the person who is to guide the deliberations, to maintain the privileges, and to enforce the duties of this great representative body, of this great united country. What the talents are which constitute the qualifications for such an office, it is not easy to describe in adequate terms; they are such as might hardly be expected to exist in combination, if experience had not shown them to have existed in the numerous instances (some of very recent date) of those who have successfully performed the task—the arduous task—of communicating honour to a station itself most honourable. In adverting to the nature and species of the qualifications which the object of such a choice ought to possess, I need not premise, as the basis of them all, a true spirit of old English loyalty; in other words, an affectionate attachment to the person and family of our sovereign, and to the ancient and reverend constitution of our country. With an unconquerable hostility to the wild and desolating principles which have waged a rancorous war against the best and dearest interests of mankind, he must be expected to unite a love of rational improvement, and of temperate correction. To an enlargement of mind, capable of embracing the most comprehensive subjects must be added, the faculty of descending with precision to the most minute; to a tenacious respect for forms, a liberal regard for principles; to habits of laborious research, powers of prompt and instant decision; to a jealous affection for the privileges of the House, an awful sense of its duties; to a firmness that can resist solicitation, a suavity of nature that can receive it without impatience; and to a dignity of public demeanor, suited to the quality of great affairs, and commanding the respect that is requisite for conducting them, an urbanity of private manners that can soften the asperities of business, and adorn an office of severe labour with the conciliatory elegance of a station of ease. In looking around this assembly (enriched as it has been by the accession of talents from another country), it is impossible not to feel a satisfaction in observing, that there is no inconsiderable number of persons in it, whom the House would pronounce equal to the demands, various and important as they may be, of the station I have ventured to describe—and that in this dignified number are to be found, as well gentlemen who have not been bred to the study and practice of the law, as those who have; for with all the partialities I may be supposed to entertain, I feel my full portion of national pride in avowing, that, splendid as the talents are which that profession has exhibited to parliament, they have been fully rivalled by those which other educations and other habits of life in this favoured country are in the course of producing to its notice and admiration.—Amidst such copious materials for a happy selection, it might be difficult for the House, if it acted upon its mere sense of supposed merit (however reasonably founded), to name an individual, without feeling that it might have occasion to suspect (and suspecting to regret, the loss of other abilities, possibly superior to those which had attracted its choice. But it is the good fortune of the House at this crisis, that it is not left to act upon the mere sense of supposed merit; for it has the experience of tried worth to guide its determination. Many of us who had seats in the last parliament, will recollect, (and with every feeling of gratitude for past and of sanguine expectation of future services), that there is a person to whose nomination that experience has set its authentic and deciding seal—I mean the right hon. gentleman who filled that office in the two last sessions of that parliament, and filled it in a manner which is justly described in the highest terms of possible praise, when I say, that it consoled that House for the loss of those eminent gentlemen, who, in the same office had commanded so large a portion of its veneration and applause. To him who stands distinguished by the suffrage of general applause, it would be presumptuous to apply the suffrage of particular commendation, otherwise I should be tempted to use my own language in expressing the sense which every member of that House entertained, and in so doing, to claim on their behalf from new members some confidence for the propriety of that sense—respecting the manner in which, by a happy mixture of industry the most severe, of knowledge the most exact, of at-

Digitized by Google

ıtion the most minute, of private civility
: most attractive, and of an observance
public decorum the most correct, that
ht hon. person performed the duty, and
ıtained the dignity of his high office. It
y be more proper for me to content
self with observing, that, in the judg-
nt of all, he fully realized all the hopes
ich were held out to that House in the
quent panegyric which introduced him
heir choice; and that he is now proposed
ı these additional advantages, that he
fesses a confirmed experience of the
ies of his office, and parliament pos-
es a no less confirmed experience of
entire ability to discharge them.
ler the impression of these sentiments,
ove, "That the right hon. Charles
ot do take the chair of this House."
Ir. *H. Lascelles* said:—In rising to se-
l this motion, I feel strongly im-
sed with the importance of the subject
r deliberation. The choice of a
ıker must at all times be a matter
ly interesting to this House, as upon
choice must greatly depend the
larity and dignity of our proceedings;
nder the present circumstances of the
try, it behoves us in a peculiar
er to place in that situation a person
ility, integrity, firmness, impartiali-
rongly attached to our happy con-
ion, strenuously inclined to support
ights and privileges of this House,
ughly acquainted with its rules and
, and, in the present increased state
rliamentary transactions, of expe-
and assiduity in business. If at all
s these qualities have been adverted
he choice of a Speaker, they are
ıe peculiarly important at the pre-
:onjuncture, since not only the fate
kingdom, but of Europe, may be
ed in the future deliberations of this
nent. The difficulties that attend
fice are great; the duties of it re-
ınremitting attention. The known
:t and pursuits of the right hon.
nan who has just been named for
pprobation, appeared to me, pre-
o his being chosen Speaker by the
ırliament, to point him out as a
person in whom to confide this
able office: but we have now more
nfidence to depend upon—we have
erience of part of the last parlia-
I consider his conduct, during
rt period he filled the chair, as
ıonourable to himself, and advan-
to the public. I should feel
desirous of enlarging upon my view of the merits of the right hon. gentleman, were I not fearful that my expressions might ill convey the sentiments of respect which I entertain towards him as an individual, and as a public character; but I have the satisfaction of thinking that I cannot more strongly express these sentiments than by seconding the motion.

Mr. *Abbot* said:—I conceive it to be unquestionably the highest honour that an individual can possess, to be deemed worthy to be recommended as a person duly qualified to fill the high and important office now the subject of discussion. But, however flattering such recommendation may be, from the terms of kindness in which it has been conveyed, it is impossible for any man who contemplates its extent and magnitude, not to feel a just apprehension of his own abilities; and the experience of the last session fully convinces me, that I ought to be doubtful of mine. The duties of a Speaker are not merely confined to the rules and orders of the House, or to daily and ordinary occurrences. Once placed in the chair, he immediately feels the necessity of an extensive mind, to enable him to investigate the extent of his duties; of a steady resolution to maintain the privileges of the House, as connected with the liberties of the people; and a vigilance which there may exist various occasions to exercise. It is true, that much light is thrown on his duties by the Journals and recorded transactions of the House: from them he most undoubtedly derives much instruction; but in doing so, he must there also learn a fact, in every page most strongly elucidated, that neither the most profound knowledge, nor the most indefatigable industry are of the smallest avail, unless he possesses in the fullest extent the confidence of the House, in my mind the sole criterion which can or ought to induce any one to accept so high and important a trust. Having thus stated my sentiments, I am wholly at the disposal of the House, and ready to obey its pleasure in whatever way they may please to determine.—Mr. Abbot being conducted to the chair in the usual form, said:—Placed for a second time, by the indulgent favour of this House in the chair, I feel myself irresistibly impelled to express to them my warmest gratitude; and in the expression of that gratitude, I hope the House will do me the favour to judge me, more from the conduct that I shall pursue, than from

Digitized by Google

any thing that I can possibly express by words.

Lord *Castlereagh* said:—Sir, it is with the highest satisfaction that I rise to congratulate you on being once more called to the high and important station which you have before filled with so much credit and honour to yourself, and satisfaction to the House. If, Sir, there could have been the smallest doubt of your possessing the confidence of the House during the last session of parliament, that doubt must now be most unequivocally effaced by the unanimous choice which has this day been made of you to fill again that high and distinguished station; a choice which will reflect as much honour on the House itself, as it must add to the gratification of your own personal feelings. I cannot sit down without adding my own congratulation on the subject.

The House then adjourned. On the following day, Mr. Abbot was presented to the Lords Commissioners, and approved of.

List of the House of Commons.] The following is

A LIST OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AS IT STOOD AT THE OPENING OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, NOVEMBER 16, 1802.

Abingdon, Berkshire.
Tho. Theophilus Metcalfe.

Agmondesham, Bucks.
Thomas Drake Tyrwhitt. C. Drake Garrard.

St Alban's, Hertfordshire.
Wm. Stephen Poyntz. Hon. J. W. Grimston.

Aldborough, Suffolk.
Sir John Aubrey, bt. John M'Mahon.

Alborough, Yorkshire.
Cha. Duncombe, jun. John Sullivan.

Andover, Hants.
Thomas Asheton Smith. Hon. N. Fellowes.

Anglesea, County of
Hon. Arthur Paget.

Appleby, Westmorland.
John Courtenay. Philip Francis.

Arundel, Sussex.
Viscount Andover. John Atkins.

Ashburton, Devonshire.
Sir Hugh Inglis, bt. Walter Palk.

Aylesbury, Bucks.
Robert Bent. James Dupré.

Banbury, Oxfordshire.
Dudley North.

Barnstaple, Devonshire.
Wm. Devaynes. Sir Edward Pellew, bart.

Bath, City of
Lord John Thynn. John Palmer.

Beaumaris, Town of
Thomas lord Newborough.

Bedfordshire.
Hon. St. Andrew St. John. John Osborn.

Bedford, Town of
Samuel Whitbread. Wm. Lee Antonie.

Bedwin (Great), Wilts.
Sir R. J. Buxton, bt. Sir N. D. Holland, bt.

Beeralston, Devonshire.
George lord Lovaine. Wm. Mitford.

Berkshire.
George Vansittart. Charles Dundas.

Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland.
Thomas Hall. John Fordyce.

Beverley, Yorkshire.
John Wharton. N. C. Burton.

Bewdley, Worcestershire.
Miles Peter Andrews.

Bishop's Castle, Shropshire.
William Clive. John Robinson.

Bleckingley, Surrey.
James Rich. John Benn Walsh.

Bodmyn, Cornwall.
Cha. Shaw Lefevre. Josiah Dupré Porcher.

Boroughbridge, Yorkshire.
Hon. John Scott. Edward Berk. Portman.

Bossiney, Cornwall.
James. A. S. Wortley. John H. Addington.

Boston, Lincolnshire.
Wm. A. Madocks. Thomas Fydell.

Brackley, Northamptonshire.
John Wm. Egerton. Samuel Haynes.

Bramber, Sussex.
George Sutton. Henry Joddrell.

Brecon, County of
Sir Ch. Morgan, bart.

Brecon, Town of
Sir Robert Salusbury, bart.

Bridgnorth, Shropshire.
John Whitmore. J. H. Browne.

Bridgewater, Somersetshire.
Jefferys Allen. George Pocock.

Bridport, Dorsetshire.
George Barclay. Sir Evan Nepean, bt.

Bristol, City of
Rt. hon. Charles Bragge. Evan Baillie.

Buckinghamshire.
Marquis of Titchfield. Earl Temple.

Buckingham, Town of
Thomas Grenville. Viscount Proby.

Digitized by Google

Callington, Cornwall.
John Inglett Fortescue. Paul Orchard.

Calne, Wiltshire.
Joseph Jekyll. Lord Henry Petty.

Cambridgeshire.
Lord C. S. Manners. Rt. hon. C. Yorke.

Cambridge, Town of
Robert Manners. Hon. Edward Finch.

Cambridge, University of
Right hon. W. Pitt. Earl of Euston.

Camelford, Cornwall.
Robert Adair. John Fonblanque.

Canterbury, City of
Hon. George Watson. John Baker.

Cardiff, Town of
Lord Wm. Stuart.

Cardiganshire.
Thomas Johnes.

Cardigan, Town of
Hon. John Vaughan.

Carlisle, City of
John C. Curwen. Walter Spencer Stanhope.

Carmarthenshire.
James Hamlyn Williams.

Carmarthen, Town of
John George Philipps.

Carnarvonshire.
Sir Robert Williams, bart.

Carnarvon, Town of
Hon. Edward Paget.

Castle-Rising, Norfolk.
Charles Chester. Peter Isaac Thellusson.

Cheshire.
Thomas Cholmondeley. Wm. Egerton.

Chester, City of
Viscount Belgrave. Thomas Grosvenor.

Chichester, City of
Right hon. T. Steele. George W. Thomas.

Chippenham, Wilts.
James Dawkins. Charles Brooke.

Christchurch, Hampshire.
Right hon. George Rose. Wm. Sturges.

Cirencester, Gloucestershire.
Michael Hicks Beach. Sir Rob. Preston, bt.

Clitheroe, Lancashire.
Hon. Robert Curzon. Hon. John Curt.

Cockermouth, Cumberland.
Robert Ward. James Graham.

Colchester, Essex.
Robert Thornton. John Denison.

Corff-Castle, Dorsetshire.
Henry Bankes. Nathaniel Bond.

Cornwall, County of.
Sir Wm. Lemon, bart. Francis Gregor.

Coventry, Warwickshire.
Nathaniel Jefferys. Francis Wm. Barlow.

Cricklade, Wilts.
Lord Porchester. Thomas Estcourt.

Cumberland.
Sir Henry Fletcher, bt. John Lowther.

Clifton, Dartmouth, Hardness, Devonshire.
Edmund Bastard. Arthur Howe Holdsworth.

Denbighshire.
Sir Watkin W. Wynn, bart.

Denbigh, Town of
Hon. Frederick West.

Derbyshire.
Lord G. A. H. Cavendish. Edw. M. Mundy.

Derby, Town of
Hon. George Walpole. Edward Coke.

Devizes, Wiltshire.
Rt. hon. Henry Addington. Joshua Smith.

Devonshire.
J. Pollexfen Bastard. Sir Lawrence Palk, bt.

Dorsetshire.
Wm. Morton Pitt. Francis John Brown.

Dorchester, Dorsetshire.
Hon. Cropley Ashley. Francis Fane.

Dover, Kent.
John Trevanion. John Spencer Smith.

Downton, Wiltshire.
Hon. Edward Bouverie. Hon. Wm. Ward.

Droitwich, Worcestershire.
Hon. Andrew Foley. Sir E. Winnington, bt.

Dunwich, Suffolk.
Lord Huntingfield. Snowdon Barne.

Durham, County of
Sir Ralph Milbanke, bt. Rowland Burdon.

Durham, City of
Ralph John Lambton. Richard Wharton.

East Looe, Cornwall.
John Buller. Edward Buller.

St. Edmondsbury, Suffolk.
Lord Hervey. Lord Charles Fitzroy.

Essex, County of
John Bullock. Eliab Harvey.

Evesham, Worcestershire,
Charles Thelluson. Patrick Craufurd Bruce.

Exeter, City of
Sir C. W. Bampfylde, bt. James Buller.

Eye, Suffolk.
Hon. Wm. Cornwallis. James Cornwallis.

Flintshire.
Sir Thomas Mostyn, bart.

Flint, Town of
Watkin Williams.

Fowey, Cornwall.
Reginald Pole Carew. Edward Golding.

Digitized by Google

Gatton, Surrey.
Mark Wood. James Dashwood.

St. Germans, Cornwall.
Lord Binning. James Langham.

Glamorganshire.
Thomas Wyndham.

Gloucestershire.
Marquis of Worcester Hon. G. C. Berkeley.

Gloucester, City of
John Pitt. Henry Howard.

Grampound, Cornwall.
Benjamin Hobhouse. Sir C. Hawkins, bart.

Grantham, Lincolnshire.
Thomas Thoroton. Sir W. Earle Welby, bt.

Great Grimsby, Lincolnshire.
John Henry Loft. Ayscoghe Boucherett.

Grinstead (East), Sussex,
Sir Henry Strachey, bt. Daniel Giles.

Guilford, Surrey.
Viscount Cranley. Hon. Chapple Norton.

Hampshire.
Sir Wm. Heathcote, bt. William Chute.

Harwich, Essex.
John Robinson. Thomas Myers.

Haslemere, Surrey.
George Wood. Richard Penn.

Hastings, Sussex.
Lord Glenbervie. George Wm. Gunning.

Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire.
Lord Kensington.

Helston, Cornwall.
Viscount Fitzharris. John Penn.

Herefordshire.
Sir George Cornwall, bt. J. Geers Cotterell.

Hereford, City of
John Scudamore. Thomas Powell Symonds

Hertfordshire.
Wm. Plumer. Hon. Penniston Lambe.

Hertford, Town of
Hon. Edw. Spencer Cowper. Nicol. Calvert.

Heydon, Yorkshire.
Christopher Savile. George Johnstone.

Heytesbury, Wiltshire.
Viscount Kirkwall. Right hon. C. Abbot.

Higham Ferrars, Northamptonshire.
Francis Ferrand Foljambe.

Hindon, Wilts.
Thomas Wallace. John Pedley.

Honiton, Devonshire.
George Shum. Sir John Honeywood, bart.

Horsham, Sussex.
Patrick Ross. Edward C. Hilliard.

Huntingdonshire.
Viscount Hinchinbroke. Lord F. Montagu.

Huntingdon, Town of
John Calvert, jun. Wm. Henry Fellowes.

Hythe, Kent.
Matthew White. Thomas Godfrey.

Ilchester, Somersetshire.
Thomas Plummer. Wm. Hunter.

Ipswich, Suffolk.
Charles A. Crickett. Sir A. S. Hamond, bt.

St. Ives, Cornwall.
Wm. Praed. Jonathan Raine.

Kent.
Filmer Honeywood. Sir Wm. Geary, bt.

King's Lynn, Norfolk.
Hon. Horatio Walpole. Sir M. B. Folkes, bt.

Kingston-upon-Hull, Yorkshire.
Samuel Thornton. John Staniforth.

Knaresborough, Yorkshire.
James Hare. Lord John Townshend.

Lancashire.
Thomas Stanley. John Blackburne.

Lancaster, Town of
John Dent. Marquis of Douglas.

Launceston, Cornwall.
James Brogden. Richard H. A. Bennet.

Leicestershire.
G. A. Legh Keck. Sir Edm. C. Hartopp, bt.

Leicester, Town of
Samuel Smith. Thomas Babington.

Leominster, Herefordshire.
John Lubbock. Hon. Charles Kinnaird.

Leskeard, Cornwall.
Hon. John Eliot. Hon. Wm. Eliot.

Lestwithiel, Cornwall.
Hans Sloane. Wm. Dickenson, jun.

Lewes, Sussex.
Lord F. Godol. Osborne. Henry Shelley, jun.

Lincolnshire.
Sir Gilbert Heathcote, bt. Charles Chaplin.

Lincoln, City of
Richard Ellison. Humphrey Sibthorpe.

Litchfield, City of
Sir John Wrottesley, bt. Thomas Anson.

Liverpool, Lancashire.
Banastre Tarleton. Isaac Gascoyne.

LONDON.
William Curtis. Sir J. W. Anderson, bart.
Harvey C. Combe. Charles Price.

Ludlow, Shropshire.
Richard Payne Knight. Hon. Robert Clive.

Ludgershall, Wiltshire.
Earl of Dalkeith. Thomas Everett.

Lyme Regis, Dorsetshire.
Hon. Thomas Fane. Henry Fane.

Digitized by Google

Lymington, Hants.
Wm. Manning. Harry Burrard.

Maidstone, Kent.
Sir Matthew Bloxam, kt. J. H. Durand.

Malden, Essex.
Joseph Holden Strutt. Cha. Callis Western.

Malmesbury, Wilts.
Claude Scott. Samuel Scott.

Malton, Yorkshire.
Bryan Cooke. Hon. C. Laurence Dundas.

Marlborough, Wilts.
Lord Bruce. James Henry Leigh.

Great Marlow, Bucks.
Thomas Williams. Owen Williams.

St. Mawes, Cornwall.
Sir Wm. Young, bt. Rt. hon. W. Windham.

Midshall Cornwall.
Robert Dallas. Robert Sharpe Ainslie.

Merionethshire.
Sir R. Williames Vaughan, bart.

Middlesex.
George Byng. Sir Francis Burdett, bart.

Midhurst, Sussex.
George Smith. Samuel Smith.

Milburne Port, Somersetshire.
Lord Paget. Hugh Leycester.

Minehead, Somersetshire.
John Fownes Luttrell. John Patteson.

Monmouthshire.
General James Rooke. Charles Morgan.

Monmouth, Town of
Lord Charles Henry Somerset.

Montgomeryshire.
Charles Wat. Williams Wynn.

Montgomery, Town of
Whitshed Keene.

Morpeth, Northumberland.
Viscount Morpeth. William Ord.

Newark, Nottinghamshire.
Sir T. M. Sutton, kt. Sir C. Mor. Pole, bt.

Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire.
Edw. Wilbraham Bootle. Sir R. Lawley, bt.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland.
Sir M. W. Ridley, bt. Charles J. Brandling.

Newport, Cornwall.
Wm. Northey. Joseph Richardson.

Newport, Hants.
John Blackburn. Richard Gervas Ker.

Newtown, Lancashire.
Thomas Brooke. Peter Patten.

Newtown, Hants.
Sir Robert Barclay, bt. Charles Chapman.

Norfolk, County of
Thomas Wm. Coke. Sir Jacob H. Astley, bt.

Northallerton, Yorkshire.
Henry Peirse. Hon. Edward Lascelles.

Northamptonshire.
Francis Dickins. Wm. Ralph Cartwright.

Northampton, Town of
Hon. Edward Bouverie. Hon. S. Perceval.

Northumberland.
Hon. Charles Grey. T. Richard Beaumont.

Norwich, City of
Robert Fellowes. Wm. Smith.

Nottinghamshire.
Lord W. C. Bentinck. Hon. C. H. Pierrepont.

Nottingham, Town of
Sir J. B. Warren, bt. Joseph Birch.

Oakhampton, Devon.
Henry Holland, jun. James Strange.

Orford Suffolk.
Lord Robert Seymour. James Trail.

Oxfordshire.
Lord Francis A. Spencer. John Fane.

Oxford, City of
Francis Burton. John Atkyns Wright.

Oxford, University of
Sir W. Dolben, bt. Rt. hon. sir W. Scott, kt.

Pembrokeshire.
Lord Milford.

Pembroke, Town of
Hugh Barlow.

Penryn, Cornwall.
Sir S. Lushington, bt. Sir John Nicholl, kt.

Peterborough, City of
French Laurence, LL.D. Wm. Elliot.

Petersfield, Hants.
Hylton Jolliffe. Wm. Best.

Plymouth, Devonshire.
Sir Wm. Elford, bt. Phillip Langmead.

Plympton Earl, Devon.
Philip Metcalfe. Edward Golding.

Pontefract, Yorkshire.
John Smyth. Richard Benyon.

Poole, Dorsetshire.
John Jeffery. George Garland.

Portsmouth, Hants.
Hon. Thomas Erskine. John Markham.

Preston, Lancashire.
Lord Stanley. John Horrocks.

Queenborough, Kent.
John Prinsep. George Peter Moore.

Radnor, County of
Walter Wilkins.

New Radnor.
Richard Price.

Reading, Berks.
Francis Annesley. Charles Shaw Lefevre.

Digitized by Google

East Retford, Nottingham.
Robert Craufurd. John Jaffray.

Richmond, Yorkshire.
Arthur Shakespeare. Hon. G. H. L. Dundas.

Ripon, Yorkshire.
Sir James Graham, bt. John Heathcote.

Rochester, Kent.
Sir Wm. Sidney Smith. James Hulkes.

New Romney, Kent.
John Willet Willet. Manaseh Lopez.

Rutlandshire.
Gerard Noel Noel. Lord Carbery.

Rye, Sussex.
Lord Hawkesbury. Thomas Davis Lamb.

Ryegate, Surry.
Hon. John S. Cocks. Hon. Joseph S. Yorke.

Shropshire.
Sir Richard Hill, bt. John Kynaston Powell.

Saltash, Cornwall.
Matthew Russell. Robert Deverell.

Sandwich, Kent.
Sir Philip Stephens, bt. Sir Hor. Mann, bt.

Sarum (New), Wilts.
Viscount Folkestone. Wm. Hussey.

Sarum (Old), Wilts.
Nicholas Vansittart. Henry Alexander.

Scarborough, Yorkshire.
Hon. E. Phipps. Lord Robert Manners.

Seaford, Sussex.
Charles Rose Ellis. Richard J. Sullivan.

Shaftesbury, Dorset.
Edward Loveden Loveden. Robert Hurst.

New Shoreham, Sussex.
Sir Cecil Bishopp, bt. Timothy Shelly.

Shrewsbury.
Sir Wm. Pulteney, bt. Hon. Wm. Hill.

Somersetshire.
Wm. Gore Langton. Wm. Dickenson.

Southampton, Town of
James Amyatt. George Henry Rose.

Southwark, Borough of
Henry Thornton. George Tierney.

Staffordshire.
Sir Edw. Littleton, bt. Lord G. L. Gower.

Stafford, Town of
Hon. Edward Monckton. R. B. Sheridan.

Stamford, Lincolnshire.
John Leland. Albemarle Bertie.

Steyning, Sussex.
James Martin Lloyd. Robert Hurst.

Stockbridge, Hants.
George Porter. Joseph Foster Barham.

Sudbury, Suffolk.
Sir John Coxe Hippesley, bt. John Pytches.

Suffolk.
Sir T. C. Bunbury, bt. C. Viscount Brome

Surrey.
Lord W. Russell. Sir John Frederick, bt.

Sussex.
Charles Lenox. John Fuller.

Tamworth, Staffordshire.
Sir Robert Peele, bt. Wm. Loftus.

Tavistock, Devonshire.
General Fitzpatrick. Lord Robert Spencer.

Taunton, Somersetshire.
Wm. Morland. John Hammet.

Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.
James Martin. Christopher Codrington.

Thetford, Norfolk.
Thomas Creevey. John Harrison.

Thirske, Yorkshire.
Sir Greg. Page Turner, bt. Wm. Frankland.

Tiverton, Devonshire.
Right Hon. Dudley Ryder. Hon. Rd. Ryder.

Totness, Devonshire.
Wm. Adams. John Berkley Burland.

Tregony, Cornwall.
Marquis of Blandford. Charles Cockerell.

Truro, Cornwall.
Edw. Leveson Gower. John Lemon.

Wallingford, Berks.
Sir Francis Sykes, bt. Wm. Lewis Hughes.

Wareham, Dorsetshire.
John Calcraft. Andrew Strahan.

Warwickshire.
Sir G. A. W. S. Evelyn, bt. D. S. Dugdale.

Warwick, Town of
Lord Brooke. Charles Mills.

Wells, City of
Clement Tudway. Charles Wm. Taylor.

Wendover, Bucks.
Rt. Hon. Charles Long. Hon. John Smith.

Wenlock, Shropshire.
Cecil Forester. Hon. John Simpson.

Weobly, Herefordshire.
Lord George Thynne. Robert Steele.

Westbury, Wiltshire.
Charles Smith. Wm. Baldwin.

Westlooe, Cornwall.
James Buller. Thomas Smith.

Westminster, City of
Hon. Charles James Fox. Lord Gardner.

Westmorland.
Sir M. Le Fleming, bart. James Lowther.

Weymouth and Melcombe Regis.
Sir James Pulteney, bt. G. Tucker Steward.
Wm. Garthshore. Charles Adams.

Digitized by Google

Whitchurch, Hants.
Hon. W. Brodrick. Hon. W. A. Townshend.

Wigan, Lancashire.
Robert Holt Leigh. John Hodson.

Wiltshire.
Ambrose Goddard. H. P. Wyndham.

Wilton, Wilts.
Richard Visct. Fitzwilliam. John Spencer.

Winchester, City of
Sir Henry Paulet St. John Mildmay, bart.
Sir Richard Gamon, bart.

Winchelsea, Sussex.
Robert Ladbroke. Wm. Moffat.

Windsor, Berks.
John Williams. Hon. R. Fulk Greville.

Woodstock, Oxfordshire.
Sir H. W. Dashwood, bt. Rt. hon. C. Abbot.

Wootton-Basset, Wiltshire.
Hon. H. St. John. Robert Williams, jun.

Worcestershire.
Hon. Edward Foley. Wm. Lygon.

Worcester, City of
Abraham Robarts. Joseph Scott.

Wycombe (Chipping), Bucks.
Sir F. Baring, bart. Sir J. D. King, bart.

Yarmouth, Norfolk.
Sir T. Troubridge, bart. Thomas Jervis.

Yarmouth, Hants.
J. C. Jervoise. James Patrick Murray.

Yorkshire.
Wm. Wilberforce. Hon. Henry Lascelles.

York, City of
Sir W. M. Milner, bart. Hon. L. Dundas.

SCOTLAND—(45).

Counties.

Aberdeen.
James Ferguson.

Argyll.
Lord John Douglas Edw. Henry Campbell.

Ayr.
William Fullarton.

Banff.
Right Hon. Sir Wm. Grant, knt.

Berwick.
George Baillie, jun.

Caithness.
Sir John Sinclair, bart.

Dumbarton.
James Colquhoun, jun.

Dumfries.
Sir Robert Laurie, bart.

Edinburgh.
Robert Dundas.

Elgin.
James Brodie, of Brodie.

Fife.
Sir Wm. Erskine, of Tory, bart.

Forfar.
Sir David Carnegie, bart.

Haddington.
Hon. Colonel Charles Hope.

Inverness.
Charles Grant.

Kincardine.
Sir John Stuart, bart.

Kinross.
William Douglas M'Lean Clephane.

Kircudbright Stewartry.
Patrick Heron.

Lanark.
Lord Archibald Hamilton.

Linlithgow.
Hon. Colonel Alexander Hope.

Cromarty.
Major General Alexander Mackenzie.

Orkney and Shetland.
Captain Robert Honyman.

Peebles.
James Montgomery, jun.

Perth.
Colonel Thomas Graham.

Renfrew.
William M'Dowall.

Ross.
Major-General Sir Charles Ross, bart.

Roxburgh.
Sir George Douglas, bart.

Selkirk.
John Rutherfurd.

Stirling.
Hon. Charles Elphinstone Fleeming.

Sutherland.
Right Hon. William Dundas.

Wigtown.
Andrew M'Dowall.

Royal Boroughs.

Edinburgh, City of
Right Hon. Henry Dundas.

Tain, Dingwall, Dornock, Wick, and Kirkwall.
Right Hon. John Charles Villiers.

Fortrose, Inverness, Nairn, and Forres.
Alexander Penrose Cumming Gordon.

Elgin, Banff, Cullen, Kintore, and Inverury.
Lieut.-Col. Francis Wm. Grant.

Digitized by Google

Aberdeen, Aberbrothock, Montrose, Brechin, and Inverbervie.
James Farquhar.

Perth, Dundee, St. Andrew's, Forfar and Cupar.
David Scott, of Dunninald.

Anstruther, East and West, Pittenweem, Crail, and Kilrenny.
General John Campbell.

Dysart, Kirkcaldy, Burntisland, and Kinghorn.
Sir James St. Clair Erskine, bart.

Stirling, Inverkeithing, Dunfermline, Queensferry, and Culross.
Hon. C. Alexander Forrester Cochrane.

Glasgow, Dumbarton, Renfrew, and Rutherglen.
Alexander Houstoun.

Jedburgh, Haddington, Dunbar, North-Berwick, and Lauder.
Hon. Colonel Thomas Maitland.

Linlithgow, Peebles, Lanark, and Selkirk.
Lieut.-Col. William Dickson.

Annan, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries, Sanquhar, and Lochmaben.
Right Hon. Charles Hope.

Stranraer, Wigton, Whithorn, and New Galloway.
John Spalding.

Rothsay, Ayr, Irvine, Inverary, and Campbeltown.
John Campbell.

IRELAND.—(100).

Antrim, County of
E. A. M'Naghten. Hon. John O'Neil.

Armagh, County of
Hon. C. A. Acheson. Hon. Hen. Caulfield.

Armagh, Borough of
Patrick Duigenan, LL.D.

Athlone, Borough of
Right Hon. Wm. Handcock.

Belfast, Borough of
Edward May.

Bandonbridge, Town of
Sir Broderick Chinnery, bart.

Carrickfergus, County and Town of
Lord Spencer Stanley Chichester.

Catherlough, County of
David Latouche, jun. Walter Bagenel.

Catherlough, Borough of
Charles Montague Ormsby.

Cavan, County of
Francis Sanderson. Nathaniel Sneyd.

Clare, County of
Hon. F. N. Burton. Sir E. O'Brien, bart.

Cork, County of
H. Viscount Boyle. R. Uniacke Fitzgerald.

Cork, City of
M. Longfield. Hon. C. Hely Hutchinson.

Coleraine, Borough of
Walter Jones.

Clonmell, Borough of
William Bagwell.

Cashell, City of
Right hon. William Wickham.

Donnegal, County of
Viscount Sudley. Sir James Stewart, bart.

Down, County of
Viscount Castlereagh. Francis Savage.

Downpatrick, Borough of
Charles Stewart Hawthorn.

Dungannon, Borough of
Hon. George Knox.

Drogheda, County and Town of
Edward Hardman.

Dublin, County of
Hans Hamilton. Frederick John Falkiner.

Dublin, City of
John C. Beresford. John Latouche, jun.

Dublin, College of the Holy Trinity of
Hon. George Knox.

Dundalk, Borough of
Richard Archdall.

Dungarvon, Borough of
William Greene.

Ennis, Borough of
Right hon. James Fitzgerald.

Enniskillen.
Right hon. John Beresford.

Fermanagh, County of
Viscount Cole. Colonel Mervyn Archdall.

Galway, County of
Hon. Richard Trench. Richard Martin.

Galway, Town of
Dennis Bowes Daly.

Kerry, County of
Right Hon. M. Fitzgerald. James Crosbie.

Kildare, County of
Lord R. S. Fitzgerald. Robert La Touche.

Kilkenny, County of
Rt. Hon. Wm. B. Ponsonby. Hon. J. Butler.

Kilkenny, City of
Hon. Charles Butler.

Kingsale, Town of
Samuel Campbell Rowley.

King's County.
Sir L. Parsons, bart. Thomas Bernard.

Digitized by Google

Lisburne, Borough of
The Earl of Yarmouth.

Leitrim, County of
Viscount Clements. Peter La Touche, jun.

Limerick, County of
William Odell. Charles Silver Oliver.

Limerick, City of
Charles Vereker.

Londonderry, County of
Lord G. T. Beresford. Hon. C. Stewart.

Londonderry, City of
Sir George Fitzgerald Hill, bart.

Longford, County of
Sir Thos. Featherstone, bt.
Hon. T. Glead. Newcomen.

Louth, County of
Right Hon. John Foster. Wm. C. Fortescue.

Mallow, Town of
Denham Jephson.

Mayo, County of
Rt. hon. D. Browne. Hon. Hen. A. Dillon.

Meath, County of
Sir M. Somerville, bart. Thomas Bligh.

Monaghan, County of
Richard Dawson. Charles Powell Leslie.

Newry, Borough of
Right hon. Isaac Corry.

New Ross, Town of
Charles Tottenham, jun.

Portarlington, Borough of
Henry Parnell.

Queen's County.
Hon. Wm. W. Pole. Sir Eyre Coote, K. B.

Roscommon, County of
Arthur French. Hon. Edward King.

Sligo, County of
Joshua Edward Cooper. Charles O'Hara.

Sligo, Borough of
Owen Wynne.

Tipperary, County of
Viscount Mathew. John Bagwell.

Tralee, Borough of
Rt. Hon. George Canning.

Tyrone, County of
James Stewart. Right hon. John Stewart.

Waterford, County of
Right hon. John Beresford. Edward Lee.

Waterford, City of
John Wm. Congreve Alcock.

Westmeath, County of
Gustavus Rochfort. Wm. Smith.

Wexford, County of
Earl of Loftus. Abel Ram.

Wexford, Town of
Richard Nevill.

Wicklow, County of
Wm. Hoare Hume. George Ponsonby.

Youghall, Town of
Sir John Kene, bart.

SIXTEEN PEERS OF SCOTLAND.

George Hay, marquis of Tweedale.
Hugh Montgomery, earl of Eglinton.
Archibald Kennedy, earl of Cassilis.
John Lyon Bowes, earl of Strathmore.
Patrick Crichton, earl of Dumfries.
Thomas Bruce, earl of Elgin and Kincardine.
George Ramsay, earl of Dalhousie.
William Carnegie, earl of Northesk.
Alex. Lindsay, earl of Balcarras.
George Gordon, earl of Aboyne.
John Campbell, earl of Bredalbane.
John Dalrymple, earl of Stair.
George Boyle, earl of Glasgow.
William Shaw Cathcart, lord Cathcart.
James Somerville, lord Somerville.
Francis Napier, lord Napier.

The King's Speech on Opening the Session.] Nov. 23. His Majesty opened the Session with the following Speech to both Houses:

"My Lords and Gentlemen;

"It is highly gratifying to me to resort to your advice and assistance, after the opportunity which has been recently afforded, of collecting the sense of my people.

"The internal prosperity of the country has realized our most sanguine hopes. We have experienced the bounty of Divine Providence in the produce of an abundant harvest.

"The state of the manufactures, commerce, and revenue of my United Kingdom, is flourishing beyond example; and the loyalty and attachment which are manifested to my person and government, afford the strongest indications of the just sense that is entertained of the numerous blessings enjoyed under the protection of our happy Constitution.

"In my intercourse with foreign powers I have been actuated by a sincere disposition for the maintenance of peace. It is nevertheless impossible for me to lose sight of that established and wise system of policy, by which the interest of other States are connected with our own; and I cannot therefore be indifferent to any material change in their relative condition and strength. My conduct will be invariably regulated by a due consideration of the actual situation of Europe, and by

Digitized by Google

a watchful solicitude for the permanent welfare of my people.

"You will, I am persuaded, agree with me in thinking, that it is incumbent upon us to adopt those means of security which are best calculated to afford the prospect of preserving to my subjects the blessings of peace.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

"I have ordered the estimates for the ensuing year to be laid before you; and I rely on your zeal and liberality in providing for the various branches of the public service; which, it is a great satisfaction to me to think, may be fully accomplished without any considerable addition to the burdens of my people.

"My Lords and Gentlemen;

"I contemplate, with the utmost satisfaction, the great and increasing benefits produced by that important measure, which has united the interest and consolidated the resources of Great Britain and Ireland. The improvement and extension of these advantages will be objects of your unremitting care and attention. The trade and commerce of my subjects, so essential to the support of public credit and of our maritime strength, will, I am persuaded, receive from you every possible encouragement; and you will readily lend your assistance in affording to mercantile transactions in every part of my United kingdom all the facility and accommodation that may be consistent with the security of the public revenue.

"To uphold the honour of the country, to encourage its industry, to improve its resources, and to maintain the true principles of the Constitution in Church and State, are the great and leading duties which you are called upon to discharge. In the performance of them you may be assured of my uniform and cordial support; it being my most earnest wish to cultivate a perfect harmony and confidence between me and my parliament, and to promote to the utmost the welfare of my faithful subjects, whose interests and happiness I shall ever consider as inseparable from my own."

Debate in the Lords on the Address of Thanks.] His Majesty having retired the King's Speech was read by the Lord Chancellor, and again by the clerk at the table. After which,

Lord *Arden* said;—My lords, the pleasure with which I have heard his majesty's most gracious speech, excites me to rise for the purpose of moving your lordships to answer it in a suitable address. We know, my lords, by personal feeling and observation, that the prosperity of our manufactures, and commerce, the abundance of the necessaries of life, the heartfelt felicity of the people, the ardour of their loyalty to his majesty's person, and their attachment to the constitution, are fully equal to that encouraging representation of them which has been given in the speech from the throne. Of the present condition of Europe, it is difficult to think without deep anxiety. There is not a power on the continent between whose interests and ours certain relations do not subsist. The order of dominion cannot be there indefinitely changed, without endangering the security of Britain. However much, then, may have been conceded to imperious necessity; whatever of the mere pride of arrogant pretension we may have been induced to wave for the sake of peace; though we may have reluctantly abandoned allies, who had no longer the power nor the will to make a stand for their own political existence; yet there are limits, beyond which it is forbidden by just policy to extend this plan of conduct. We cannot, therefore, but approve his majesty's resolution to keep the vigilance of his government awake to the changes in the arrangement of continental power. Such vigour of preparations as may be requisite to give due authority to that vigilance will be neither disagreeable to the nation at large, nor inconsistent with the warmest wishes of the members of this House. We can cordially sympathise in the sense of the happy effects which have already ensued from a union that has concentrated the energies, and usefully simplified the administration of these kingdoms. The supplies which, in such a state of affairs, to a government so beneficent, from a country so flourishing, may be wanted, a people so loyal will not be easily persuaded to deny. His lordship then moved an address, which was an echo of the speech from the throne.

Viscount *Nelson* said:—I will not deny myself the pleasure of seconding an address with the purport of which my wishes zealously coincide; nor am I willing to omit this opportunity of expressing my satisfaction at the prosperity of these kingdoms, and my approbation of a plan of government, which proposes to main-

Digitized by Google

tain the ancient dignity of the country, in the system of Europe, though without any hot-headed sacrifice of the benefits of peace. War has not exhausted our resources: our national industry has not been slackened; nor has it been frustrated of its rewards. The prosperity which the country enjoys, is such as would render us inexcuseable were we to sacrifice its honour. Unsuccessful, so far as we were directly engaged, in the war of valour, of martial force, of military talents, France may, perhaps, hope to gain more by that of artifice, of circumvention, of equivocal faith: but British strength of understanding and rectitude of intention, ever have been, and I hope in God will ever be, more than an equal match for every less candid and ingenuous art. I, my lords, have, in different countries, seen much of the miseries of war. I am therefore in my inmost soul, a man of peace. Yet would I not, for the sake of any peace, however fortunate, consent to sacrifice one jot of England's honour. Our honour is inseparably combined with our genuine interest. Hitherto there has been nothing greater known on the continent than the faith, the untarnished honour, the generous public sympathies, the high diplomatic influence, the commerce, the grandeur, the resistless power, the unconquerable valour of the British nation. Wherever I have served in foreign countries, I have witnessed these to be the sentiments with which Britons were regarded. The advantages of such a reputation are not to be lightly brought into hazard. I, for one, rejoice that his majesty has signified his intention to pay due regard to the connection between the interests of this country and the preservation of the liberties of Europe. It is satisfactory to know, that the preparations to maintain our dignity in peace are not to be neglected. Those supplies which his majesty shall for such purposes demand, his people will most earnestly grant. The nation is satisfied that the government seeks in peace or war no interest separate from that of the people at large; and as the nation was pleased with that sincere spirit of peace with which the late treaty was negotiated, so, now that a restless and unjust ambition in those with whom we desired sincere amity has given a new alarm, the country will rather prompt the government to assert its honour, than need to be roused to such measures of vigorous defence as the exigency of the times may require. My professional education will plead my excuse for the imperfect manner in which I deliver my sentiments; but I should not have done my duty if I had not, even in this plain seaman-like manner, seconded the present address.

The Marquis of *Abercorn* said, it was common to declare in that House, at all times, and under every circumstance, that the present was the most tremendous crisis in which the country had ever been placed; but if ever such a declaration could be made, otherwise than as a mere figure of speech, the moment in which he was speaking might correctly be so described. Our national character, our fame, our credit with the rest of Europe, and, above all, our future security, depended altogether upon the firmness and spirit of the government. His lordship adverted to the extraordinary aggrandizement of our ambitious and inveterate enemy, and the danger that might befall this country, if a vigilant eye was not kept upon our rival, and such measures pursued as were best calculated to turn aside every mischievous attempt to undermine our power and lessen our greatness. He declared his readiness to support, as far as he was able, those ministers, be they who they might, who would adopt that spirited system which the exigency of the times rendered indispensably necessary. After an elaborate eulogium on the merits, virtues, and integrity of Mr. Pitt, the marquis begged their lordships to reflect, that it was not the views of ambition, the acquirements of territory, or the increase of national power, that he was desirous of recommending to their attention; but a more rational and a more moderate object, the preservation of the united empire such as it then was. We still remained a great and a free people, the happy subjects of a beloved sovereign. He did not wish to be considered as the advocate for war; he spoke rather as the friend of peace when he urged the necessity of being able to repel insult or aggression. Much had, in former sessions, been said of our being left at a certain period of the war without allies; for his part, he thought that the happiest circumstance of the war; but, in fact, if a renewal of hostilities should be unavoidable, it would be found that we had allies more powerful than France could hope for. The chance of events was our ally; scarcely any change could take place in

Digitized by Google

another war which would not be a loss to France and a gain to Great Britain. He hoped that the unanimity of the House that night would convince all Europe of the unanimous determination of the people of the united kingdom, to support and maintain their weight and importance in the scale of nations.

The Earl of *Carlisle* expressed the satisfaction which he felt at the change which had taken place in the sentiments of ministers, as conveyed in the Address. He congratulated the House and the country on the tone in which that Address was conveyed, which he hoped would have the happy effect of inspiring public confidence. As to the terms of the peace, he entertained but one opinion of them; and that opinion he had expressed when those terms were submitted to the House. Dr. Johnson, having been asked his opinion of Ossian's Poems, answered, that they were poems which might be written by any man, any woman, or any child; the same opinion might be advanced with greater certainty of the peace. He had watched the present administration from the first concoction of it—it was weak in its formation; and on that account he entertained very little hopes that it would gather energy in its progress. He wished to know, then, what had been done? Why, Piedmont had been annexed to France, with other important places, and yet ministers sat quiet spectators of the aggrandisement of that country? The effect of this indifference was felt over all the country. It inflated those who exercised the government in France, when they found that the administration of this country did not hold the string in their hand to pull them down again to a proper level. When the French troops were collected to embark for the West Indies, that would have been a proper time to have convinced the rulers of France, that, however disposed the cabinet of this kingdom was, to listen to peace, they were determined that the best means of securing the continuance of it was to prevent the execution of such a measure, which could not fail to strengthen the power of France, and to lead to an opinion that we were disposed to accept of peace on almost any terms. The Address, however, met with his cordial approbation; and he was heartily pleased with the spirit and tone which it breathed.

The Duke of *Norfolk* cordially approved of the Address; it was such as became the dignity of that House, and could not fail of having its due effect on the country at large. If, however, the change in the minds of ministers arose from any hopes of a disunion between France, and any of the continental powers in amity with us, he wished to have it understood that he did not vote for the Address under that construction. He was sorry that any allusion had been made to an event which was at all times to be lamented, however weak in its origin, and feeble in its progress (alluding to the affair of colonel Despard); that affair had made a great sensation in the country, and he wished that ministers would not follow the example of their predecessors in magnifying such wicked attempts; but that they would bring these men to trial, that they might be punished according to their crimes, without wounding the constitution.

Lord *Grenville* said:—I perfectly agree with a noble lord who preceded me, that the new parliament has been assembled at a period pregnant with events of the greatest importance to Europe, and to mankind at large. At no convocation of parliament was the curiosity of the public more strongly excited. All men, doubtful of the principle and policy of the present ministry, were anxious to learn whether we were to have peace or war—anxious to know whether we were ready to truckle to France, or about to defend ourselves against the daring encroachments of that government. The interests and happiness of Europe were nearly destroyed by the inordinate ambition of the French government, which was extending its power and authority to the total subversion of the liberties of mankind. Were we, therefore, to view with silent indifference this deplorable subjugation of Europe on the one hand, or meet with manly fortitude the perilous consequences of war? I am for the religious maintenance of our national character and glory, against all the artful contrivances or combinations of France; and I cannot recommend the adoption of a better policy for the attainment of that end, than a laudable vigilance and an exemplary activity for the general interests of Europe. The speech from the throne meets, in several sentences, with my hearty concurrence. It may be reduced to three propositions, with every one of which I most heartily agree, because every one of these propositions tend to censure the present men in power for their want of capacity, and want of vigi-

Digitized by Google

lance. The speech expresses satisfaction at the opportunity of resorting to the advice and assistance of parliament. By this observation the ministers evince their wisdom, and it is one of those sentences which deserves the approbation of both Houses. If, however, ministers had been in a state of vigilance and activity since they last met parliament, how came it to pass that France had been suffered to invade the rights and overturn the liberties of various states on the continent? If ministers had conducted themselves with manly fortitude—if they had been actuated by the true spirit of Englishmen—if they had felt for their own honour and the national dignity, they would not have looked on with a censurable indifference: they would have demanded satisfaction for a breach of treaty—they would have checked the violence and rapacity of France, and thus have saved, perhaps, the liberties and independence of several states, once important in the scale of Europe. These remarks form two propositions. Was any attention paid to the machinations of France between the signature of the preliminaries of peace and that of the definitive treaty? No. Did not France, during that interval, dispatch a powerful fleet to the West Indies, without the smallest intimation to us on the subject? Did not she then take measures dangerous to our interest as a maritime power? Did she not, in the plenitude of her rapacity, take possession of the valuable settlement of Louisiana? Ought not that measure alone to have aroused our jealousies on account of our influence in America and the West Indies? We saw also Europe prostrate at the feet of France, and, in the insolence of conquest, her territories plundered, and her liberties destroyed. Ought we not at that alarming period to have demanded retribution? Had we then boldly stood forward in the cause of liberty, France would have receded from her desperate measures. Had we invoked her justice with arms in our hands, we might have saved Europe from the tyranny of the French republic. —What occurred after the signature of the definitive treaty? Did France conduct herself with moderation? Did she give any testimony of her wish to render peace permanent? No. The ink was scarcely dry with which it was signed, the wax scarcely cold with which it was sealed, when France, in violation of the treaty of Amiens, began to add territory to territory to the republic. Piedmont, one of the most beautiful parts of Europe, in complete defiance of justice and public faith, felt the griping hand of rapacity and ambition. Had Great Britain at that time, in concert with Russia, remonstrated against these aggressions, France would not have ventured upon this wanton exercise of power. With that cunning which has characterised the French government, Piedmont was at first occupied as a military position. This plan was adopted in the contemplation of the act of aggression which followed. They concluded a treaty with the king of Sardinia, our old and faithful ally. After this, they congratulated themselves on the success of their scheme. "Now we are safe!" said they: "Now we can fall upon our victims like birds of prey!" and soon published a decree, by which they threw off the mask, and added Piedmont to the French republic. The treaty was signed by the king of Sardinia, when a prisoner in his own capital. Notwithstanding the deplorable state to which he had been reduced by the treachery of France, he insisted, that he should not be obliged to act with hostility against Great Britain. This was another proof of the integrity and honour of the king, who therefore merited our best attentions. On a proposition having once been made to him by the French, that he should exclude the English from his sea-ports, he indignantly rejected it; and thus proved, that his fidelity to our interests was not to be shaken by adverse fortune. This, however, was the very man whom we afterwards abandoned! When we had signed the definitive treaty, we had not signed at the same time an admission on the part of France to her right of occupancy of Piedmont—we had not surrendered our right of interfering for the preservation of the liberties and independence of the other states of Europe. As there was evident danger from the possession of Piedmont by the French, we ought to have checked their ambition in that memorable instance of injustice and depredation. Mark the rapid progress of the aggressive spirit of France. The definitive treaty was signed in March, and ratified in June. In August, France took upon herself to regulate and new-model the several states of Europe. As our ministers made no remonstrance, it may be presumed, that they gave their acquiescence to the encroachments of the French. The ambition of the latter was

Digitized by Google

not very easily gratified; for, in their predilection for new-fangled doctrines, they were resolved to overturn and new-model the constitution of the German empire itself, and this attempt engaged their attention so early as the said month of August, some very few months after the signature of the definitive treaty. Still, however, our ministers viewed the passing scene with indifference. In the height of their pacific disposition towards the French, they never made the smallest attempt at complaint or remonstrance for these daring encroachments, which threatened the total subversion of the liberties of Europe. These acts, particularly the last, were direct violations of the treaty of Amiens. In the terms of pacification, another old and faithful ally had been forgotten, if not sacrificed—I mean the House of Orange. We had looked on with criminal indifference, while that illustrious House, always warmly attached to Great Britian, was robbed and plundered by the French government. I well remember when this question was once agitated in this House, that the noble marquis (Cornwallis) who had concluded the treaty of Amiens, rose up with honest warmth, and asked, if any man could for a moment believe that the house of Orange, so deserving of the protection of this country, would not be amply indemnified for the losses which it had sustained? Notwithstanding the manly remarks of the noble marquis, all passed away in silence. Instead of a manly interference, our ministers sunk into a state of submission to the will of France. These transactions bring the conduct of administration down to the month of September, when it appears they viewed the aggressions on the part of France with the same apathy which had marked their precious direction of affairs. The third proposition to which I formerly alluded, was that in which his majesty's speech recommends an augmentation of our forces. This was certainly not very pacific; but the eyes of ministers were at last opened; they see the necessity of vigour and watchfulness. This proposition receives my hearty concurrence, because it is the strongest censure of the ministry. It proves that none but idiots or madmen, in the critical state of Europe, could be induced to a reduction of our naval and military forces. We were now, however, called upon to consent to an augmentation of those very forces; and there was no doubt but that the caution was founded in prudence and necessity.—On the retrospect of affairs, I cannot help expressing my astonishment at the absurd conduct of ministers. We have now obtained peace, and yet, instead of the boasted reduction and savings which we were taught to expect, we are to have a speedy augmentation, with all its consequent expenses. Is the aspect of affairs more alarming now than in October 1801, when our secretary for the foreign department signed the preliminaries of peace? Yes. Who has produced this dilemma? His majesty's present ministers. Every step of their conduct since has been a proof of their total incapacity to govern a great nation in times of difficulty and danger. They can form no judgment of the future, from a comparison with the past. They are men of weak understandings, and completely unfit for the situation in which they move. But they now see their error, and tell us that we must be watchful of the conduct of France. If, however, we are to expect any real good, there must be a total change of men and measures. The political career of the present men in power may be termed a series of ignorance and disgrace. In our madness for a hollow peace, we had sent out orders to surrender all our conquests to the enemy. Why not wait for the confirmation of peace by some sincere and indubitable act of the French government? Why surrender Martinique, &c.? I would not have disbanded one man, or dismantled one ship. But a report is prevalent, that ministers have sent out orders not to surrender the remainder of our conquests. Why not have issued the same orders in time against the surrender of Martinique? I rather wish than expect, that the orders for retaining the Cape may reach that settlement sufficiently early to answer the end proposed. Malta, I believe, is still in our hands. I hope we shall not expose ourselves to the scorn and ridicule of Europe by its surrender. This country has now the happiness to hold that important place; and its commanding interest in the Mediterranean is too great ever to be abandoned by a wise and vigorous government.—From all these considerations, I can have no confidence in the present administration. Respecting the internal situation of the country, I have forborne to say one word. I do not wish to excite needless jealousies and alarms. The more judicious and vigorous a government in

Digitized by Google

dangerous times, the more safe is the community at large. But lately, instead of acting on the defensive, instead of watching the operations of France with an eager solicitude, we have been aiding France against ourselves. History records, that our ancestors, in order to induce the Saxons or Danes to desist from the resolution of the invasion of this country, gave them large sums as bribes. What was the consequence? They applied the money thus obtained for the purchase of ships, ammunition, &c. with which they made a grand effort, and thus subjugated this country. Our present conduct was somewhat similar. We surrendered Martinique, &c. as a bonus not to violate the peace. Let us add Malta to the bribe, and the price of peace will be complete. We shall then, perhaps, experience a similar attempt against our liberties and independence by the daring ambition of the natural and avowed enemy of Great Britain. The whole conduct of our ministers has tended to the increase of the strength of the enemy. France has been continuing a system of conquest and aggrandisement which is now coming home to our own doors. Is any man so absurd as for a moment to imagine that she will be more favourable to Great Britain than to Piedmont, Switzerland, &c. What claim have we to her partiality? It is a lamentable fact, that whether you do or do not maintain the relations of peace and amity with France, she is now at war with you. You have no hope of salvation, but by a strong system of defence. Europe is at this time sunk in distraction and despair; but the energy and spirit of Great Britain may arouse the states of the continent to a glorious struggle for their liberty and independence. If, however, there be any hope, it is to be found in measures of decision and firmness—in a bold and animated tone, held by a leader of courage and capacity—not by any of the men now in power, but by him to whom this country, to whom Europe, looks up at this awful hour for the preservation of their dearest rights and liberties.

Lord *Pelham* said, that was not the proper time to go into a detail of the nature and extent of the intended augmentation of the force of the kingdom; he hoped, therefore, that his silence upon the subject would not be construed into an assent to the construction that had been put upon that part of his majesty's speech; but thus much he would say, that no sudden or great augmentation of the troops was intended, nor did there appear any thing in the state of Europe that made such an augmentation necessary.

Lord *Carysfort* said, he was sorry to learn from the noble secretary of state, that they were not likely to be gratified with that essential augmentation which the critical situation of the empire required. It was undoubtedly a serious thing to engage in war, but there might occur circumstances which might make such a measure unavoidable. His lordship drew the distinction between peace and war being considered as experiments. War, he admitted, to be an experiment, because the events of a war were uncertain; but peace, he contended, was not an experiment, but a matter of certainty. He gave his hearty assent to the address.

Lord *Hobart* complained of the injustice of a noble lord, late one of his majesty's ministers, in censuring the king's present servants on account of the dismemberment of Germany, when he could not but know that the treaty of Luneville was made during that noble lord's administration, and that Germany was brought into its present condition by circumstances which were not subject to the control of any ministers. It was enough for him to say, that the indemnities in Germany were not considered as of sufficient importance to prevent our making peace. The noble lord had charged his majesty's servants with incapacity; it did not become him, to say one word in answer to such a charge. He would however, say, that the present ministers did not seek their situations. They were called upon to take them in a moment of great and accumulated difficulties. He therefore only desired, that the present administration might be judged by its conduct. If France had extended her dominion over the greatest part of the continent, it had been under her power long before the noble lord retired from office; and if that noble lord had not been able to prevent such aggrandisement, he had no right to charge the present ministers with misconduct. But that noble lord could not charge the present ministers with incapacity, without at the same time criminating himself for having relinquished his post.

The address was agreed to *nem. diss.*

Digitized by Google

Debate in the Commons on the Address of Thanks.] The Speaker stated, that he had been in the House of Peers, where his majesty had delivered a most gracious speech.

After the King's Speech had been read from the Chair,

The Hon. Mr. *Trench* rose and said, that in prefacing the proposition he meant to submit to the House, for an address to his majesty expressive of thanks for his gracious speech, it was natural that, feeling the importance of the present period, he should allude to the state of our commerce, agriculture, and revenue, and to our relative situation with foreign powers. It was to be expected that, in addressing the first parliament which had assembled since the accomplishment of that measure by which the legislatures of Great Britain and Ireland were united, and the resources of the empire consolidated, he should speak to the consequences of that happy event. First, then, as to our internal resources; he was happy to understand that every branch of our manufactures, and every department of our revenue, was in such a state of prosperity as to afford the most satisfactory cause of exultation. Whreveer we turned our eyes, the vigilant attention of government, the successful industry and the steady loyalty of the people, were obvious. Every where was found ample reason to congratulate ourselves, and experience had shown that the predictions of those who had opposed the peace stood on no better foundation than those which so confidently foretold that the war which was concluded would produce the ruin of the country. Although peace had been productive of such fortunate consequences, and although its continuance was devoutly to be wished, yet he strongly approved the declared policy of ministers, to place the empire in such a situation as should render it superior to the apprehensions of war; and if that alternative should become necessary for the maintenance of our honour and security, in such a situation as to protect us from the consequences. He was aware that it would be extremely absurd to maintain, that the spirit of encroachment upon the independence of other nations, which the French government had in so many instances manifested, did not present just grounds of alarm and jealousy; but whether we should interpose to check that spirit, without any concert with other powers, and what degree of concert might be necessary to interpose with effect, was a subject which required a minute consideration of a variety of important circumstances. Whatever resolution might be taken, or whatever the event, it was material to preserve our resources; and under the auspices of our present ministers that object had been particularly attended to. Every one must applaud the economy they had uniformly preserved, and the pacific disposition they had uniformly manifested; but if they should not be permitted to pursue that line of policy, it was desirable that full provision should be made for such an establishment as should enable them to encounter any obstacle. The country looked for such an establishment, and was ready to endure the expense, because they saw it was necessary. The state of the continent was one to which he could not look without anxiety; but with regard to this country, he saw nothing to create despondency. With reference to Ireland, he was enabled, from his local knowledge, to describe the change which the Union had effected in that country. Its manufactures, commerce, and agriculture were rapidly improving. For this the inhabitants felt they were indebted to the provident care and attention of the united parliament, and to the active exertions of ministers. This conviction had the most salutary effect on the Irish, particularly the loyalists, whose attachment to England, in the most perilous times, remained unshaken, and had restored many of its deluded people to their reason, and to the sober habits of industry. He could not forbear to pay his tribute of praise to those who had a share in his majesty's councils, for their unremitting endeavours to promote the interests of his country. They deserved his confidence, and they possessed it. The hon. member concluded with moving an address which, as usual, was an echo of the speech from the throne.

Mr. *Curzon* expressed his complete concurrence in the sentiments of the hon. mover, to which he did not conceive it necessary to add more, than to observe, that he felt himself fully satisfied with the state of the country, and with the loyal, orderly, and pacific dispositions which, with very few exceptions, the people had universally manifested. However, from the increased strength of France, and the extended line of coast subject to her power, he though: it wise to support the

Digitized by Google

establishment proposed, and he was the more readily disposed to accede to that proposition, from understanding that it would not be attended with any material addition to the public burthens.

Mr. *Cartwright* perfectly agreed in the opinion of the hon. mover of the address, that the best way of rendering the blessings of peace permanent was, to be prepared for any exigency; and when the conduct of the French government was considered, and when the character of the man by whom that government was administered, was taken into account, caution and preparation on our part became essentially necessary. With such considerations in view, ministers were highly culpable in so precipitately disarming; nothing so sudden had occurred on any former peace, when it could have been done with more safety; so reduced was our naval force at present, that we had not, in case of the renewal of hostilities, a sufficient fleet in commission to protect our ports, while the French government, taking advantage of the peace, seemed to devote its chief attention to the augmentation of her navy. After this country had consented to the cession of the Netherlands to France, and to yield to her the absolute control of Holland, it was inconsistent with the pacific and prudent policy which ministers professed, to have presented such a remonstrance respecting Switzerland, as rumour described: however he might deplore the sufferings of that brave people, he could not approve of such an interference on our part; it was a foolish unnecessary provocation to war, or must be attended, as it had been, if rumour could be credited, with a pusillanimous retraction. Considering all the circumstances of the empire, the state of Europe, and the prodigious talents of the man who wielded the power of France, he could not help regretting that he was not met by the exalted abilities of a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt), who was now unfortunately absent. He was sure the country would go with him in lamenting the loss which the public interest must sustain from the absence of that illustrious character.

Sir *John Wrottesley* said, that conceiving the situation of the times extremely perilous, and that the imprudence of the present ministers led in a great measure to that situation, he could not forbear to censure those ministers. The period which had passed since the conclusion of peace had been productive of many important events; but he much feared, that amongst them could not be reckoned the improvement of our commerce and revenue. It seemed that ministers now began to see the ambitious spirit of France; recent events were, indeed, sufficient to convince the most incredulous, that peace was not so secure; that the French government was not so pacifically inclined as was not long since confidently stated. Within a short time, that government was seen arrogantly dictating to the Emperor, annexing Parma to her already overgrown territory, and audaciously interfering to deprive the gallant Swiss of the right of establishing their liberties, an act that ranked among the most atrocious that modern history presented. It was, indeed, stated that ministers remonstrated against this proceeding. If ministers did so, he trusted they would lay a copy of that remonstrance on the table of the House, and that it would appear to be such a one as the nation could be proud of, even though it had not produced the desired effect; for Switzerland was now over-run by above 40,000 French troops, and its best patriots were consigned to the dungeon, condemned to share the fate of Touissaint. In such a state of affairs, he most ardently wished that those abilities could be called forth which lately directed the administration of our government; that those talents which once preserved the country, might again come forward to save it. The occasion was not less pressing, and, judging from experience, he was encouraged to hope, that the known disinterestedness of that right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt) would not at this crisis desert him; that when his country was in danger, he would attend to the call of his countrymen.

Mr. *Pytches* said, he had never heard or read any speech from the throne that would more properly assimilate to a *salmagundi*. It was composed of such a *mélange* of ingredients and taste, so much of every thing, that it was hard to say which was predominant. In one place it spoke of the rapid increase of commerce, manufactures, and connexions, as the happy results of peace; and in the next, it intimated a propensity to violate peace, as the only mode to promote that prosperity. That sentiment seemed to be approved by some gentlemen who had spoke on this question; but he hoped no man

Digitized by Google

would come forward unfeelingly to call for the support of that House on the renovation of war. Melancholy prophesies were set forth upon trivial occasions; and the country was now prepared to expect that peace was extremely doubtful. He had not the most distant idea, however, that the French government had any hostile intentions towards this country, nor was it consistent with the dignity of Great Britain to express such an idea; but if it was conceived, that on the part of France any violation of the treaty of Amiens had taken place, let them be politely and gently reminded of the circumstance, and he had no doubt but the matter would be rectified. He believed it would be allowed that every man's duty was, to make his own existence comfortable; so it was with nations. Dr. Johnson had said, that the sensation of fear was given us for our protection against danger, and upon this ground, he presumed, was founded the frequency of alarm. No nation, he believed, in this respect had more of the woman in its feelings than Britain, for she was constantly pregnant with apprehensions, and daily delivered of bastard alarms; and those who professed to attend with the greatest solicitude for her safety, instead of infusing salutary cordials and administering wholesome warmth, healed her in a manner to produce all the cold qualms of a mischievous abortion. We were told in the speech that peace was uncertain, and that war was deprecated; but as to the result, we were left to think for ourselves. We were taught to understand, by the supporters of the address, that we were menaced with new dangers, and that nothing would ward off the blow but ruinous and depopulating war. To such a principle he could not assent, so long as it was avertible by fair and honourable expedient; and as to that heterogeneous composition called the speech, he reprobated it as a piece of bad machinery, and servile adulation which every good monarch should execrate and forbid: as the offspring of vassallage, which ministers kidnapped and occupied as an artifice to pledge the House to their measures.

Mr. *Fox*—Sir; I should not have risen so early in the debate, if it had not been for some expressions that had fallen from gentlemen opposite, which render it necessary for me to enter into an explanation of my reasons for giving my cordial support to the address. There is, I confess, one expression in his majesty's speech, referring to the blessings which are to be found in the union with Ireland, to which I cannot assent. I, for one, who disapproved of that measure when it took place, desire most distinctly to be understood, as not by my vote of this night giving any sanction to it. There is another material part of the address, to which, though I cannot conceive the least objection, yet as it is explained by the hon. mover, would be extremely objectionable indeed. It is stated by him that his majesty recommends, and that we approve, the idea of extending our military establishments. Sir, his majesty's speech relates to no military establishment whatever, but that which is best calculated to give security to the kingdom. Those who, when the question is brought forward, shall be of opinion that large military establishments are necessary for the security of the kingdom, will state their reasons; and those who with me think that small establishments are better adapted, not only for the continuance of peace, but for the better enabling us to renew war, should it be necessary, will have the same opportunity of expressing their sentiments; but till the question is before the House, I see no reason why we should give an opinion one way or the other. One hon. gentleman seems to think his majesty's speech of too pacific a nature. He says, what! are we to hold this pacific language towards France, when she has done every thing in her power to irritate this country? Instead of such observations as these, I should have expected that he would have given us some particulars of the irritations he alludes to, and have shown us that we ought to have taken some steps to resent them, which his majesty's ministers have neglected. Another hon. gentleman is of opinion, that something of a more warlike tone might have been desirable in his majesty's speech, and he states, at the same time, that our manufactories are not in the condition which has been so sanguinely described. For myself, I shall give no opinion on the subject. I hope the hon. gentleman is mistaken; but whatever be the case, of this I am certain, that there is only one wish in the House and the country, that our internal situation should be such as by the speech it is described. Undoubtedly there are circumstances in the state of

Digitized by Google

Europe which cannot fail to excite considerable alarm; but I hope there is no reason to be alarmed about the prosperity of our manufactures and commerce. Admitting, however, for the sake of argument, that they had suffered decay, I hope no one can for a moment conceive the absurd idea that we could better our commercial and manufacturing interests by plunging again into war.—With regard to the objections to the address, they will be considered in a different way by different sides of the House. Those who defended the treaty of peace, will defend it still on the same principles which induced them to give it their approbation, and they will naturally view the objections to the address as frivolous and inconclusive. Those, on the other hand, who contended that they would not have made peace on the terms which the treaty contained, will be anxious to break a peace which they would not have made, and to renew a war which they wished to continue. But it may be said, that war would not now be renewed on the same principles on which it was formerly prosecuted, and that new causes of war had occurred since the treaty of peace was concluded. I cannot appeal to the House, for the decision took place in a former parliament; but I can appeal to many gentlemen who now hear me, to consider what the principles were on which they approved the peace, and whether any thing has taken place since the treaty was concluded which would authorize them to give their vote on the present occasion for breaking the treaty and recommencing hostilities. Supposing war to be renewed, gentlemen would do well to reflect in what manner hostilities would be conducted. Supposing a determination were taken to renew the war, it is obvious that our means of annoying the enemy would consist simply in retaking the places which by the treaty we had agreed to cede, or in retaining those still in our hands. Now, Sir, I say distinctly, that to violate the treaty of peace for such an object as this (and under the present circumstances no other object could be obtained) would be to place the ministers of this country and the members of the last parliament who had approved of the treaty in a situation to excite the ridicule of all Europe. The continuance of peace, I do contend, is infinitely desirable; I feel its importance in the strongest manner. Adverse, however, as I am to the renewal of hostilities, I do not mean to assert that no circumstances may have followed the peace which would fully justify ministers in refusing to comply with its provisions. I am not ashamed to avow an opinion for which I have not unfrequently been exposed to ridicule, and now explicitly to declare, that I consider the preservation of national honour to be almost the only legitimate cause of war. This doctrine I hold on the plain principle, that honour is directly and inseparably connected with self-defence. If it can be proved to me that the national honour has been insulted, or the national dignity disgraced, I will without hesitation declare my opinion, which is, this would be a fair, legitimate cause of recommencing hostilities. I must, however, hear a very strong case made out, before I can give my vote for replunging the country in those disasters which a calamitous contest had produced, and from which we were so recently delivered. Though I contend that honour is the only legitimate foundation of war, I do not mean to deny that other circumstances may come in aid of its force. In the present circumstances of Europe, I see no ground of war, so far as this country is concerned. There never was a period when every consideration of the soundest policy more strongly suggested the propriety of cultivating the continuance of peace. Without referring to the calamities of the last ten years, I ask gentlemen, fairly, whether in pursuing this policy, the country ever had more fair play? There are some persons who affect to entertain a dread of the French navy; but it is hardly possible to believe any one serious in indulging any alarm on this subject. As to the acts of the French government indicating a spirit of hostility to the interests of this country, I shall at present say nothing. They are not now before the House, and may be better animadverted on at another time if any real ground of complaint actually exist. It is my firm conviction, that there is on the part of the French people, as well as the French government, a strong desire to restore their commerce to new activity, and their manufactures to new life; and this, I believe, is the field in which, if any contest is to be carried on betwixt the two countries, they wish the dispute to be conducted. Of the result of such a rivalship we have very little room for apprehension. We have got so much the start of them, that we must take the

Digitized by Google

lead; and, if they had the start of us, our superiority is so great that we could not fail speedily to overtake them. In this contest we should be certain of victory, and every intermediate step in our progress would only afford new facilities for increasing our superiority, and augmenting our improvement. It would be absurd, indeed, to pretend that this fair prospect will not be marred; but of this I am perfectly convinced, that it must be a very strong case which would justify the recommencement of hostilities, instead of employing our resources in cultivating the arts of peace. Is there a man in this House, or in this country, who, after the disasters which have been sustained during the progress of a wild and destructive contest, would again renew a contest with France, without any support but that derived from the co-operation of a few German princes, whose troops might be subsidized to engage in our cause? I trust that so extravagant a project will not again be adopted. If, contrary to every suggestion of expediency and every dictate of policy, it should be embraced, it requires little political sagacity to foresee that the result will be incalculably disastrous. The first and grand object which we ought to have in view is security; but there can be no true security which is not upheld by honour: there can be no true dignity which is not supported by character. An hon. gentleman, however, finds a new ground of war in the character of the French government. He is surprised to find it not so friendly or conciliating as he expected at the time the treaty was concluded. Did the hon. gentleman really expect that the French government was henceforth to entertain towards this country no feelings but those of friendship? Did he imagine that we might expect from it every interchange of civility and kindness, that our government would find in it a powerful and disinterested ally? If such were the hon. gentleman's ideas, I confess myself at a loss to know on what they were grounded. There was certainly nothing in the language employed at the time when the merits of the treaty were under discussion, to countenance this supposition. The very reverse was the impression which every part of the discussion was calculated to inspire. By those high in office a very different prospect was held out to the House and the country. A noble lord opposite (Hawkesbury) made use of a remarkable expression, when describing the situation in which the peace left us with relation to the other powers of Europe. He said that the continent was in "a very unsatisfactory state," a sort of language by no means calculated to suggest any ideas of friendship or cordiality on the part of the French government. The immense aggrandisement of French influence and French power is doubtless a subject of deep regret, and no man laments it more than I do. It must be lamented by every Englishman, and this very aggrandisement is with me a grand cause of accusation against the late ministers, by whose obstinacy and misconduct it was obtained. But, Sir, let gentlemen who hold this language reflect, that with the knowledge of the continent being in the state which the noble lord described, the treaty of peace received the approbation of the House and the country. Who was not aware that the power of France was increased to a degree which naturally excited jealousy on the part of this country? Who did not take this into his contemplation when called upon to give his vote on the merits of the treaty of peace? No one pretends that this was not known; but, knowing this, seeing this, stating this, it is impossible for any rational man to deny that these causes for war, drawn from the state of the continent, which were now so much insisted upon, were known at the time when the treaty of peace was sanctioned; and to hold them up now as grounds of renewing the contest betwixt the two countries, was equally impolitic and unjust. There indeed remains a question how far the state of the continent, in consequence of intermediate events, was more unsatisfactory than at the time when peace was concluded. These acts, whatever their nature may be, are not now before the House, and therefore I shall not now speak to them. A great deal has been said about the disposition of the people of this country in favour of a renewal of the war. This I have no hesitation in affirming to be completely false. Of all the fictitious crimes which ever were imputed to the people of England, and certainly they have often been accused of crimes of which they were incapable, even in thought, I pronounce this to be one of the most groundless. The origin of this calumny it is not difficult to trace. It arises from the coalition of some newspapers, who affect to hold out this as the

Digitized by Google

real disposition of the people. Their motives for such representations may be various. They may wish to gratify spleen, or to increase their circulation, by contriving something to excite the curiosity of their readers. I do believe in my conscience that the people of this country are, at this moment, as eager to cultivate the blessings of peace, as at any former period. Mankind have been too often sacrificed to the ambition of princes, and to the intrigues of parties; but if the publishers of newspapers are to be the means of plunging the nation again into a destructive contest, it will be the most base and ignoble cause in which a people was ever engaged. But we are told that a most considerable body in this country ate strongly actuated with a desire that the war should be renewed. The class to which I allude, are the commercial interest in all the capital trading towns throughout the country, but more especially in the metropolis. To this representation I am not disposed to give my assent: the merchants in this country are too liberal and too respectable a body of men to have any wish to replunge their country into all those calamities, from which she has just begun to emerge, from any hope of gain arising from contracts with government, or from any of the other means of emolument which spring out of a state of war, and which to one class are the sources of aggrandisement, while to the community they are pregnant with misery. If, however, the fact be as gentlemen represent it, I should feel disposed almost to wish the reverse of those ages of splendid achievements which distinguished the history of antiquity. If human beings are to perish to gratify any passion of our nature, I should rather that their blood should flow to gratify the romantic ambition of an Alexander, than to fill the coffers of a cold calculating body of unfeeling merchants. Let us not be accused, Sir, of a wish to renew those disasters which for ten years have desolated Europe, to open afresh those wounds which have so long afflicted suffering humanity; let us not disturb the peace of the continent when our interference can produce no beneficial effect. When there is not a single power ready to second our efforts, let us not by a rash step forfeit those blessings which are indispensably and eternally connected with a state of peace. Great enterprises, which might in my opinion with much more propriety be styled rash actions, are flattering in prospect, but disastrous in the result, *spe læta, eventu tristia.* We are now in a state of domestic tranquillity, of flattering internal prosperity, and when our commerce as far as the nature of human affairs justifies anticipation, may become daily more extended.—There is another point on which I shall make one or two observations. At the commencement of the late war, the House, and I believe I may add the country, were as it were hurried into the contest by the expectation that the struggle was one which would not be arduous during its continuance, or protracted in its duration. Fatal experience has, however, demonstrated the fallacy of such anticipations. I hope, Sir, we shall not again be hurried into any new war on the expectation of its only lasting one campaign. If we again engage in war, it is surely important to weigh well the nature and consequence of such a step, and I trust that ministers will feel this importance before they give up the certain benefits of repose for the uncertain chances of war.—With respect to the present administration, it is almost unnecessary for me to say, that I have no sort of connexion with them. I thank them for having made peace, and I hope they approve the treaty which they formerly concluded. If we have made peace, I trust it is in the true spirit of peace. I do not mean to accuse them of any design of concluding a treaty under peculiar circumstances, and afterwards availing themselves of some change to refuse a compliance with its conditions, to undo all that has been done, to retain and retake all the settlements which were previously agreed to be ceded. The power of France is unquestionably too great; but it is not increased to such a degree since the peace was concluded as to justify a rupture. The interference of France in the German indemnities is a subject of complaint. Did ministers not know, Sir, that there was an interference naturally to be expected? By not being parties to the treaty of Luneville, did we not know that France would interfere in the subject of the German indemnities, and what reasonable ground of complaint now exists? The language of the late ministers was explicit: they told us that it was not for the interests of this country to treat in conjunction with Austria. She had consulted her separate interests, and we were freed from our engagements. As we were unwilling to share in the advantages, we

‡

Digitized by Google

had no right to complain of consequences easily foreseen, and of effects easily anticipated. France, as might have been expected, did interfere in the arrangement of the German indemnities, and Russia has been induced to join in the same object. I do not mean to go into any minute illustration on this subject. I content myself with a general observation, which is, that this interference is in some points of view not unfavourable to the interests of this country, as they may be collaterally affected. I have only to conclude with expressing my ardent hope, that peace is the first object of the government, as I am convinced it is the strongest wish of the people.

Mr. *Canning* said, he concurred in the approbation given to the address by the hon. member who preceded him, but with a variation upon some points of opinion. The first object was, to know what line of conduct he might be deemed to support in the vote he was about to give. Whatever some bold men might think proper to assert, in maintaining that war was the remedy for the evils that surrounded us, all must concur, or at least a great majority, in approving the system of preparation which ministers were adopting. The hon. gentleman who spoke last seemed to doubt the expediency and necessity of our increasing our naval and military establishments. But whether the House was ultimately to sanction them, he considered as matter for future discussion; and gentlemen were pledged by the present address, to support them no farther than the circumstances of the country might require. He, for one, gave the ministers credit for the peace they had concluded; but by doing so, they had not done every thing; all was not done, if every thing was conciliation on our part; all was not done, if we gave our rival to understand that we were ready to submit to insult, and were not disposed to take advantage of any ebullition manifested in the country in favour of standing up for the rights of other nations. The speech from the throne had not alluded to any of those notorious transactions on the continent which occupied so great a portion of the public attention, and only exhorted us to repose confidence in the wisdom of his majesty's councils. If, however, the interference of those councils in some foreign proceedings were really such as had been represented, they, in his judgment, afforded no great grounds of confidence in their future wisdom. There was no man, for instance, who did not sympathize in the sufferings of the people of Switzerland, and rejoice in the gallant example of spirit and love of independence which they exhibited. They must be peculiarly so to Englishmen, who knew not how soon they might be called upon to exercise the same virtues. It was, however, to be hoped, that our government did not instigate that unfortunate country to resistance; and if our interference was such as public notoriety proclaimed it, certainly no remonstrance was ever so unwise. He thought it of importance to know by whom and to whom that interference was made. It was evident, that the feelings of all ranks of people in this country were in unison with those of the Swiss: but a wise administration should not suffer itself to be led or influenced by such feelings on every occasion; and if our remonstrance was precipitate, it did injury instead of good. The blow was then already struck. We had no alliance on the continent to back our interference—Austria was quite unprepared or unequal to the attempt, and we could not expect to call armies with the same facility that men might call a coach from a stand. Our interference, therefore, was ill-advised and unnecessary if it was made, and could not be attended with any moral or political good whatever. The Swiss were already conquered, and the business was done. Did the ministers accompany their remonstrance with a declaration, that if it should be ineffectual, a war would be the alternative? Upon this subject we had no official communication. In some cases there was nothing more proper than secrecy, but he was not disposed to approve of it as applied to the people governed. There should on all such occasions be a communion of sentiments between the king and his people. When the preliminaries of the late treaty with France were under discussion, we were congratulated by persons in high situations, on the circumstance that our intercourse with the continent would in future be relaxed, if not suspended; but that, at the same time, it was our determination no longer to submit to insult or encroachment. Such was then the impression, and now we had a right to know upon what system we were going; whether we were to interfere in the internal affairs of the continent, or whether we stand alone, mindful only of our own concerns, dis-

Digitized by Google

severed from those of the other powers; or pay, like our ancestors, a due regard to the general interests of Europe. Some thought that we ought to stand or fall by ourselves; others (Mr. Wilberforce) that we were "too honest" for any kind of interference. For his part, he could not much admire that superabundance of honesty which some gentlemen were content to state in their places, and others, perhaps for different purposes, in popular harangues to assemblies and their constituents. The addresses and speeches to which he alluded, though they could not be regularly quoted in that House, must have made a strong impression on the public mind; and the country ought not to be suffered to run riot in the expectation of peace, while a system was pursuing, which must have a tendency to lead us into war.—With respect to the reliance to be placed on the general measures of administration, he professed himself a friend to recruiting an exhausted army and a dismantled navy in the face of an imposing adversary; although, unquestionably, some late proceedings left us to retrieve and repair, instead of keeping what we had. The incorporation of Piedmont with France was accompanied by the disbanding of our army; and the allotments of Germany was, perhaps, the effect of the dismantling of our navy. All our foreign acquisitions were, in fact, given up at the time that we should have kept the proportion with our adversary, of ship for ship, and man for man. Any contest that we could have now, was acknowledged to be not so much for power as for honour; but the worst method of upholding the latter, must be to let down the national spirit. He, for himself, had no disposition to go to war at present; but, from some speeches that he had heard delivered by persons in authority, he was to infer, that a decay of the national spirit was the cause of making peace. This, however, was a position which he was ready to deny: on the contrary, he maintained, that there never was a period when the people were more ready or more able to continue the war with vigour. An hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox) seemed desirous of tracing all the difficulties of our situation to the late administration. He, on the other hand, contended, that the state in which they left the country, on retiring from office, was the reverse of being calamitous. He was ready to go through all the circumstances, point by point, and could scarcely restrain his indignation when it was asserted, that nothing but a desperate effort of patriotism could have induced any other set of gentlemen to succeed them. It was indeed true, that the country was then left involved in an extensive war, and that a war with the neutral powers was then in its commencement; yet, notwithstanding all this, there perhaps was never a situation which afforded more temptation to the wishes or ambition of those who were proposed to succeed them. An armament had already been proposed to meet the exigencies of the neutral war, and to bring it to a successful termination, and that armament effectually and gloriously put an end to it. The same administration had prepared and sent forth the Egyptian expedition, the success of which so materially contributed to the peace. He was very far from wishing to disparage the present ministry; yet it was but justice to say, that they succeeded to office with this great advantage in their favour, that, as the expeditions were crowned with success, they were in a condition to claim the merit of it; whereas, had they failed, they would not have been liable to any responsibility. As to the finances, he must remark, that all the supplies of the year had been previously provided for, the internal tranquillity was secured, and the remnant of party in a great measure disbanded. He said thus much, in justice to a set of men, to whom there was reason to ascribe the salvation of the country. Nothing could, therefore, be more desirable than the succession obtained by the present ministers. It remained then to consider, what reliance was to be placed on administration for their political conduct since their accession to power. There were only two points which struck him—the neutral war and the peace that they had concluded; but they were left by their predecessors the means of putting an end to the one, and its success naturally led, in its consequences, to the accomplishment of the other. With a view to this question, he would look how this country stood in relation to Russia. We had dispatched thither a very able minister; but immediately afterwards we found it a party to the plan of the German indemnities. In a short period, subsequently, Russia showed a disposition to interfere in preventing the annexation of Piedmont to France, and Piedmont was probably lost to the king of Sardinia in

Digitized by Google

consequence of our refusal to join in the Russian interference. Thus far as to our grounds of reliance on ministers for their conduct in the neutral war. He next came to review their merit in concluding the late treaty. It was to be observed, that the House, by approving of that treaty, was not bound to it in all its parts. It had indeed been discussed, but never debated in its terms. The approbation given to it was not on the ground that the terms were advantageous, but on the idea held out that the peace would be durable. If, indeed, he had reason to conclude it would be lasting, he felt no disposition to quarrel with the terms. These were examined, but not canvassed; and the country hailed the event with acclamation, in the hopes that it would be permanent. The disposition of France was then taken upon trust; but how was it now manifested in the present state of Europe? And let it be remembered, that the people might have acted otherwise, if they had known what was to happen. He was willing to agree to any thing which would add strength to the strength of the country; not so, however, to that which would strengthen rivalship, which would at length be turned against us when matured and invigorated—a rivalship—"qui auctum et reconditum promeret." France only waited for a favourable opportunity of showing that her emulation was not that of commerce, but extermination; and if it had not burst forth before, it was only because the means were wanting. He wished not to speak against a system of preparation, but must condemn any thing that tended first to lull the people, and afterwards suddenly call upon them for vigorous exertion. He wished at once to excite a steady conduct, a persevering courage, and a disposition to take, not a little and contracted, but a great and comprehensive view of every interesting subject. He was an advocate for our having a ready, productive activity, not only capable of meeting particular emergencies, such as those of Switzerland and Malta, but to meet every danger to which we may be exposed—a vigilant, waking activity, diffusing itself over every part of Europe.

Lord *Hawkesbury* observed, that the honourable members who had discussed the question now before the House, had all agreed to assent to the address, but upon grounds that were different, some of them opposite, to each other. He could not agree with the hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Fox) in some points that he had stated, nor with his right hon. friend who spoke last in others. He agreed in many of the sentiments which had been delivered by Mr. Fox; but he did not agree with him, that the events which had happened since the signing of the preliminary treaty, might not, in the opinion of many persons, create a material difference in the relative situation of the two countries; for certainly France did not then stand in the situation in which it stood now. In stating this, he did not mean to enter at present on the question, whether it was wise in his majesty's ministers to conclude the peace on the terms in which it was concluded, nor to enter into any comparison between the events as they stood then, with the events that have happened since the peace. He had said, at the conclusion of the peace, that it was right then to close the account of the war, and that, with all the conditions upon which it was made, it would be wise to look always on the farther encroachments of France with jealousy and watchfulness; and he had said also, that much might depend upon the chance there was of success in endeavouring to stop it. He wished not to apply this to the present case; but the distinction which that observation was intended to convey, was material. His right hon. friend had asked, what the system was on which ministers had acted, and whether they had relinquished the system on which they had concluded the treaty? To this he answered, that they acted now precisely on the same system as they acted when the definitive treaty was concluded, and that the principle which was then avowed, was the principle which would govern them; it was a principle which was perfectly clear, intelligible, and practicable. That principle was stated by the hon. gentleman opposite with perfect fairness—it was, that as far as respects the interests of this country, the peace was made on terms that were honourable, in as much as it preserved the integrity of the British dominions; and it was added, at the time of the discussion of that treaty, that, as far as it respected the state of the continent, many things were left under circumstances that were unsatisfactory, and ministers had expressed regret upon that occasion. The principle on which his majesty's ministers justified themselves then was this: that to continue the war for continental objects, without the prospect of continental support, would be

Digitized by Google

absurd; and that consequently it was better to take the chance of peace than the chance of war—that if we were to have the alternative, it was desirable for us to try peace, when, in continental objects, our expectations had ceased.—This was the principle on which ministers then acted; it was the principle on which they now acted, and on which they would always be ready to act and to justify themselves. His right hon. friend had alluded to some general topics, and referred to the opinions of other persons as to the system which ministers ought to pursue, and who did not agree with ministers. But he had mistaken some sentiments which were uttered by him (lord Hawkesbury). It was stated, as if something was said on the discussion of the definitive treaty, that it was the policy of this country to abstract itself from the continent. That was not the principle then avowed; but he remembered having said something very different himself on that occasion. He had said, it was not the system of this country to abstract itself from continental concerns, and attend exclusively to its own resources and internal affairs; he should have thought, if some respectable persons had not expressed a contrary opinion, that the case was too clear for any doubt to be entertained upon it. He owned, that to a country so large, and territories so extensive, commerce so great, and interests so complicated, it was impossible to apply, with good sense, the principle of abstracting itself, and to attend to mere internal policy of its own, distinct from all concern with the affairs of other states, upon all occasions. Those who should ever attempt to guide the affairs of this country upon a contracted system, would soon find it a policy which they must abandon, or sacrifice the real interests of this country. He might object to this system on a more large and extensive principle than any that he had hitherto mentioned; but it was not his intention to be diffuse in what he had to submit to the House: he knew that he might allude to what had been the practice of his majesty's ministers; that was a subject on which he felt more delicacy than otherwise he would have difficulty in the detail. He thought, however, that the affairs of states, like the affairs of individuals, took their course from the circumstances and importance in which they stood. States that were in size and consequence of a subordinate kind, had to follow a rule of policy different from that which would be a wise one to a great and important state. Inferior or subordinate states, like inferior and subordinate individuals, had to look chiefly to maintenance and support, often little more than preservation of existence. But individuals of rank and station, of high condition in life, had the support and assistance of others to attend to; the concerns of others, and interests of others to consider, and, in some cases, to provide for. So in states. Great and powerful states had to look to many things besides their own immediate and internal interest; both policy and justice required that they should attend to other objects; for the interest of a great and powerful state was often combined with those who were inferior to it, as well as in endeavouring to set some limits to another power; and therefore it was to him a matter of surprise, that any person of an enlarged understanding should suppose that it could, under any circumstances, be the interest of this country to pursue an abstract system, unconnected with any part of the affairs of the continent. This, he presumed, would be an answer to that part of the speech of his right hon. friend, which tended to imply, that the policy of his majesty's ministers was that of an abstract insulated nature. But still there might be circumstances that ought to govern them. It was fresh in the recollection of all who heard him, that this policy of attending to expediency had governed this and other states in the concerns of kingdoms—one of a recent date; it was the case of a nation, not much less than that of France itself in point of territory at the time—more populous than several of the then independent states of Europe; and yet that vast nation had been blotted out of the map of Europe, as an independent state. It must be obvious that he alluded to Poland. Upon that occasion, there was in that House and in this country, but one feeling; and yet it had been held, not only by ministers, but also by a considerable body of those who opposed them, that this nation ought not to go to war on that ground. He did not believe that any considerable body of men blamed ministers for their conduct on that occasion. Why? Because whatever pretence it might furnish afterwards for continuing a contest that might be inevitable, it was unadvisable at that time, however desirable; because it was impossible for us

Digitized by Google

to have interfered, with any chance of success without continental support. Another transaction was to be found in the history of Europe, which was more immediately connected with the direct interest of this country on the subject of continental policy: it was that of the conduct of William 3rd, under all the good qualities of that prince and his admired general policy, and when the political system of this country was established on the wisest footing; he meant the great point by which the ambition of Louis 14th appeared on the death of the king of Spain on the war of succession. It was then declared by William to be the policy of this country, under all the circumstances, not to interfere alone in that question, so as to involve us in a war, without continental support; and this was the opinion of a prince, who, from his education and habits, was certainly prone to an interference in continental affairs. In a word, it was his opinion, that without continental support this country ought not to interfere in continental concerns on the ground of expediency; but this was a totally distinct thing from any abstract insulated policy. It was a policy founded on the reason of the thing, arising out of circumstances over which we had no control. With regard to the circumstances of the present moment, and what would have been wise for his majesty's ministers to do, that was, as he had said already, a question of more delicacy than difficulty for him to speak upon. He should, however, speak in general terms upon that topic. He would say, that the conduct of his majesty's ministers was governed by a consideration of all the circumstances of the case, by a due consideration of the value of the objects, of the then peace, and of the state of the continent at the time. Putting the first point for a moment out of the question, many observations might be made on the state of the continent. It might be well worth consideration, whether, if they thought that the objects themselves were such as would deserve the renewal of hostilities, and we were determined to take that course, it was probable, at this moment, we should have any effectual support? This was a point which must be governed by a variety of considerations; and he had no difficulty in saying, that although, after a war such as that which had been closed with the magnified state of France, peace was, under all circumstances, desirable, yet he should have rejoiced, and he believed that every reflecting man in the country would have rejoiced, if, by a wise, temperate, and firm conduct in the other powers of Europe, a barrier could have been put to farther encroachment; but, at present, from points, some of which had been foreseen at the time of making peace—he meant particularly some questions as to the indemnities, which must give to France advantages in all continental discussions of this kind—many evils arose which were unavoidable. It was not necessary for him, at this time, to consider the question of indemnities; though there was much injustice, yet perhaps something of the kind was inevitable. It was a system of indemnity, so called, and nothing more. But so it happened, that the moment the discussion was opened, France had it in her power to hold out immediate advantages to some states which made them less vigilant than they should be over the general interests of Europe: so that in this respect a system was established which was not to the interest of this country. He had, however, cautioned the House on this point: yet most persons agreed, that the present circumstances did not warrant a renewal of the contest: but what was most material to be considered was this, if continental connexions must be had with a view to such a renewal of hostilities, if it should ever become necessary, by a hasty and a premature renewal we should lose all the advantages of a well-concerted system. This was not a point on which he wished to hold out any expectation to the House; he could not with propriety do so if he had any grounds for it; but the House would feel the propriety of the principle which he had laid down as a rule to guide this proceeding. If we had only a desire for the continuance of peace, this principle was correct; it was likewise correct even in the event of hostilities being unavoidable. He wished to be most distinctly understood, as maintaining the opinion, that under the present circumstances of this country and of Europe, if peace can be maintained, consistently with honour to ourselves, under a proper defensive system, it is, under all circumstances, better than a renewal of the war, even connected with a consideration of all the events which have happened. His right hon. friend had stated some words of his, used on the discussion of the definitive treaty, respecting the national spirit of this country at that time. Now, he did not

Digitized by Google

state the sentiment in the insulated manner mentioned by his right hon. friend; yet he did state then, and he believed now, that if a sufficient case were made out of injustice to us, and not only of injustice, but also with a reasonable expectation of success, the spirit of the people was fully equal to any contest in which we might be engaged; yet, that after ten years war, carried on so extensively, the spirit of the people did require, in some degree recruiting; and therefore, under all the circumstances, peace, if made with honour, it would have been wise to make, even on terms less advantageous than might have been expected at the first year of a war. But this did not apply exclusively to this country; it was applicable to the whole continent of Europe, which consequently required recruiting, to give a chance of success in the contest, an object deserving great regard. He was one of the last men in the country to hold out desponding language. He thought he had a manifestation of public sentiment upon this occasion, as upon other occasions, which proved, that if a renewal of hostilities became inevitable, however desirable peace might be, the spirit of the people would be fully equal to the contest. With regard to the allusion of his right hon. friend to a supposed transaction by which the honour of this country was committed, he could say, that no step had been taken which committed or forfeited the honour of this country. He would correct the statement of his right hon. friend on another point, for he seemed to have gone upon an idea, that the resistance of Switzerland, was instigated by this country, or that after the commencement of that resistance, his majesty's government interfered and held out encouragement to that resistance. He thought it important to say, that no part of this event was instigated by the government of this country. Two hon. gentlemen who spoke early in the debate, seemed to look at the present situation of Europe with dissatisfaction. They had stated that some events had taken place which might have been foreseen; they seemed to distrust the firmness and sufficiency of his majesty's ministers to conduct the affairs of the country at the present crisis; and they accompanied this observation with a reference to the abilities of a right hon. gentleman, who was prevented by indisposition from being in his place this day. In every thing they could say, with reference to the abilities and the services he has performed to his country, he will find no person more ready than myself to agree with them. I certainly approve of the measures of that right hon. gentleman. I have proved it by voting for them; but it is not always in the power of the greatest abilities to command success. The events which happened toward the close of that administration is a proof of it; and therefore I felt the more surprised, when my right hon. friend stated circumstances as if the condition of this country was at the time of the close of that administration, the most flourishing, the best calculated for the continuance of war, or for the making of peace, that was ever known. With regard to that event, I know that no motive did actuate him (Mr. Pitt) in quitting office, but a sense of duty—a matter of opinion on a great and important question. But does my right hon. friend recollect the state of this country then, with a great combination of almost all Europe against us. Does he recollect the dismay felt as to various events, when the present ministers succeeded to that administration? I allude to the question with the Northern powers, which led to the battle of Copenhagen. It is well known, that other powers were strongly attached to what was called the neutral code; and even after the battle of Copenhagen, and the death of the emperor Paul, no point could be attended with more difficulty than that question was. With regard to the expedition to Egypt, no man applauds that expedition more than I do, or thinks, that, under all the circumstances, it was not the wisest disposition that could be made of our force at the time; but to state it as my hon. friend has done, as one in which the event was uncertain, considering the comparative force of the French, the difficulties which our force had to encounter, and the whole of the detail of that expedition, I own astonishes me. If my right hon. friend consults the military officers employed in that expedition, he will find it was not at the commencement of the present administration an event that had any certainty about it. Some hon. gentlemen seem to think that our military force has been imprudently disbanded, and our fleets dismantled; but the truth is, that never in the first year of a peace was the establishment so considerable as it is now, and particularly the navy, nor was there ever

Digitized by Google

a period in which the navy of France was so reduced. My right hon. friend states, that what he looks to, is not the terms of peace between the two countries, but the animus. Now if we look to the animus alone, and are not to have peace until we were satisfied upon that particular, we never should have had peace at all. I think it is manifest, from the terms of the three last treaties of peace concluded with France, compared with their conduct, that at the very time of signing, they meditated a breach of them. The animus is therefore out of the case. To preserve peace, and to give to the country an opportunity of improving its great resources, will be the policy of ministers; but they cannot look to the events which have lately happened, without calling on the House and on the country, to entertain a spirit of watchfulness. Our policy has been, and will be, to resist unjust demands made by any foreign power, and to preserve peace as long as we can, consistently with that policy.

Mr. *Windham*:—I do not rise to make any observations upon the general doctrine advanced by the noble lord so far from thinking it unsatisfactory, I shall be content with even less than it holds forth. My purpose in rising is, to offer a few words upon the general state of the country, and upon the address. Considering the speech from the throne, and the address, which is its echo, as the speech and address of the minister, our situation is alarming indeed, when, on the very first day of a session, we are told of insults and strides on the part of France, which require extraordinary jealousy and precaution; but if these things have not been foreseen, if this be the first impression which government has had of them, then are we lost indeed! It seems that an hon. gentleman's powers (Mr. Fox) have lost all their energy when touching upon the French revolution; the character of his mind has also lost all its feeling. At its commencement he told us there was nothing extraordinary in the French revolution, that there was nothing so simple and easy in a state as a change from one form of government to another. The ship (said he) is in stays; she is now on a tack, but you need not be afraid, she will sail safe into port without falling foul of you. This was his language in the beginning of the revolution. But when this, "stupendous monument of human wisdom" was raised, then he thought it was of importance to us; for in these great edifices, if the foundation be not good, and the walls be not perpendicular, they may fall and spread ruin wide around them. At the beginning, it was as innocent a thing as ever came into the world; it was one of those things that become vicious by ill treatment; and yet, when grown up, it has destroyed all before it, as well that which did not, as that which did offend it. Those that lay in its way, and those who did not wilfully resist, it alike overthrew. We may, indeed apply the words of Shakespeare, as an image of his conduct —'You beat the blind boy, and the blind boy beats the post.' Since the peace, France has conquered Piedmont; she has conquered even the hon. gentleman's old friend, the duke of Tuscany; and yet, he says, she is only a commercial rival. I should be glad to know how long the two countries are to go on in this way of commercial rivalship? Has France no power to engage in any other sort of rivalship? Is any man prepared to say, that she has not? What, after country has fallen upon country; when messenger comes in upon messenger, as in the last scene of a tragedy, to announce some new calamity; and these events so rapidly follow each other, that the news is stale when a day old, is it for the hon. gentleman to rise and say, that France is only a commercial rival! When I say that the country betrays every mark of dissolution, when I represent it as going the way of all flesh, and when I am asked, why I think so? I am disposed to ask those who doubt me, why they think otherwise. That I think is the more natural question of the two, and I illustrate it thus: suppose a man for some years in another world should inquire of a person recently arrived from this, about the state of this family of Europe; he would be told, that of the twenty nations which he formerly knew, there were only four or five remaining in an independent state: that Flanders was annexed to France; Prussia, though nominally independent, entirely under her influence; Spain, her vassal; Portugal, at her mercy: Genoa, in name and reality, the property of France; Switzerland just fallen; and Modena, Parma, in short, the whole of Italy, all gone: that Austria was so feeble she dare not move a step, and the whole of Germany partitioned and divided; would not such a person, if an Englishman, after being told all this, pause before he put the question upon the fate of Eng-

Digitized by Google

land? Would it not be more natural for him to suppose that it had shared the fate of the rest, than that it should have survived such general ruin? This, then, is the case, as matter of mere calculation upon the number of states; but how much more strong does it become, when, in addition to the number of fallen powers, it is considered that the infection is of that nature, that the more it has destroyed, the more able it becomes to destroy more. The cases are precisely the same. The proof, then, is not upon us to shew, that we have not perished, but upon the others to show why we have not. It is merely a question of Cocker, namely, if in a given time France has destroyed so many powers, in what length of time will she be able to destroy the remainder? But the case is stronger still; for not only has she the same force to destroy, but she possesses it in an increased proportion, which is inversely as the resistance; so that France goes on to the attainment of her object in a ratio compounded of these two quantities, her power to destroy, which is equal, and the quantity of resistance, which is constantly diminishing. See then at what rate France has gone for the last six months, and you will find at what rate she will go in future. This is that compound increasing rate which I have mentioned, unless it be said that she moves only at that rate in time of peace, which enables her to take an extraordinary start; a case which I shall leave to others to explain. But it may be said, that the peace will stop it. As well might it be said, that the conclusion of the last century could stop it. Take out the map of Europe, and measure not leagues, but climates and degrees, and see how much France possesses in Europe. Russia is a power of great extent, but nothing to France in population. France, including her own people, and those under her immediate influence, has the use of a population of between fifty and sixty millions, amounting to half the population of Europe. She has been always a more populous country than this, as her population amounted to twenty-four millions; but formerly there existed circumstances which counterbalanced this excess of population. Now, however, that counterbalance is destroyed, and we have the whole of her population against us, together with what we have lost and she has gained upon the continent. With respect to the nature and situation of territory, it may lay remote and detached, as that of Russia, which extends into the north of Asia, and so cannot be brought into effect. The population may also be timid and feeble, like the Asiatics, with whom we have been fighting; but is that the character of the people of France, or of the nations whom she has overthrown? Looking at this I must exclaim with Macbeth——

> "Can such things be,
> And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
> Without our special wonder? You make me strange,
> Even to the disposition that I owe,
> When now I think you can behold such sights,
> And keep the nat'ral ruby of your cheek,
> When mine is blanch'd with fear."

Such is the feeling with which I look at this part of our relative situation. Look now at the other side. The first effect of the peace was a reduction of our expense, and a great saving; as if our wealth was expected thereby to grow faster than the power of France, and consequently improve our situation; and with this view the reduction of our naval establishment, after the treaty of Amiens was so rapid, as to place us in our present perilous situation, to say no worse of it. This prospect of gain is, however, likely to fail us; for if they see that they keep us between high and low armaments they may do away all our savings, just as a man might spend as much on journies to Hounslow or Windsor as on one to Edinburgh. But if we are to weigh gold against the sword, and commerce against continental politics, and if trade should go on in a prosperous course will that satisfy the statesman? I shall always give merchants credit for their good wishes to the country, but on a question of this kind, they are not the best authority, as being interested parties. The merchants look to present gain; but they may be bad guardians of the country in relation to its future prosperity, just as tenants of church lands, who have short interests, are inattentive to their future improvement. I shall not, however, go into the detail of trade on this subject, but content myself with a general view which may be more correct. I ask then, by what rule or law of nations all trade shall centre in our ports, and France possess imperial power? I wish it to be considered, that France remaining as she is, may destroy its source, and break it up at once by a new war. France acts upon this ground; and with this view she has taken great naval and commercial stations in all parts

Digitized by Google

of the world. She has proceeded as an engineer in the time of Louis 14th would have proceeded, choosing what fortresses it would be advisable to destroy, and what to keep and improve. In this spirit she forms her commercial establishments in every part of the world, and hangs every where upon the sources of our wealth. That these will soon grow up, is what no man can dispute. France may then prescribe to us in our commerce, and cut and carve out our trade with other nations as she shall think proper. This is the rivalry in which the hon. gentleman, as a declared supporter of the peace, sees no danger. He appeals to the trader, and not to the trade; the present trader may approve, because he may have an interest, but the ultimate system may be ruined. To say that France may not hereafter injure our navy or our trade, possessing as she does, such naval and commercial stations, no man can venture; and as our navy and our trade helped each other up, so they may help each other down. If, however, it should be asked, of what importance is this danger of rivalship in trade at a remote distance? to that I answer—we must consider that we are running a race with a wolf, who, though we may not be able to run him down, may turn short upon us. Now it may be said, to what does all this lead? To this I answer—it leads to a just sense and view of our internal situation, which is the source of all manly resolution and prudent conduct. In the alternative of peace or war, we cannot understand the reasons for the one but in the other. The reasons for war we have now found out in the peace. We are like the testy old bachelor, who took a wife, and exclaimed, "Aye, aye, now that I am married, I have found out what is the matter with me." So with us, we have now discovered the reasons for war in the peace. We have always talked of these two states, as if, because they are opposite in their nature, they must have opposite effects; that if war was bad for the country, peace must be advantageous. There may be danger in both states. You may be so unprosperous in a war, that it may not be in your power to make peace. This was nearly the case of the last war, which was unsuccessful in relation to some of the objects assigned to it. In my view of it, however, it was not unsuccessful; for what I say is, that we are in a better situation than if it had never been undertaken. It has not, however, enabled us to make peace with France with safety, and in that view it has been unsuccessful, and left a cause for much anxiety. France is now of great power, with the means of increasing it. I suppose then that we thence understand our situation; that we are engaged with a rival who means our destruction, and to make its accomplishment the last of her Herculean labours. When the hon. member talked of the pacific disposition of France, and deprecated the wars of princes (but not one word about the wars of the first consul), I thought he had brought over some friendly remonstrance; for, says he, in what has France violated the treaty of Amiens? I did not think that any casuist would argue that there are not grounds for war exclusive of the treaty of Amiens, and that it is only a question of prudence. Now, if he had said, that, whatever might be the ambition of Buonaparté, the public opinion in France was pacific, and would control his design, this would be a security; but, in contemplating that "stupendous monument of human wisdom, the name of the people in that free country has never been once mentioned by the hon. gentleman. We see, then, that his ambition is not restrained by public opinion; and hence it has been able to make such havoc. But, so far as public opinion goes, when I consider the language and addresses presented to the first consul, as demonstrative of it, I must believe the accounts of well-informed people, who have lately returned from that country, all of whom assert, that the great sentiment there is the destruction of England, to which they ascribe all the ills that they have suffered; an idea which they have been taught to cherish by those who have so often inveighed against the late "unjust and unnecessary war," as they have styled it.—Now, to come to the chain of commerce, credit, and capital; although the changes have been rung upon these three things as distinct, upon a nearer view they may be comprehended under the head of commerce singly, and it is at this that France aims. See, then, what she has done to attain it. Since the peace she has built thirteen ships of war, six of the line and seven frigates; and she has imported 10,000 ton of hemp, which is equal to a year's consumption of the British navy in time of war. Never was there a greater expedition than that which she sent to St. Domingo; and all this she has been enabled to do by British

Digitized by Google

credit, and partly by British ships. Added to these, she is now preparing another expedition from Holland. We heard much at the time of the peace of the poverty of France, and her inability to engage in such undertakings; but we now find that she can avail herself of British credit to accomplish them. It was then argued, as if we might go on in our commerce quietly and unmolested; but she now sees that she can break up our system whenever she pleases. On the other hand, we also begin to understand our situation. Men who wished to stop these results have been called men of blood. disturbers of the Western family. A surgeon may advise an amputation without being a man of blood. The patient may wish it without being a man of blood. A kind sympathising husband and father may recommend these experiments without being monsters. No; those are the monsters, who, when the fond mother had by an exertion of her tenderness summoned up resolution to suffer an operation upon her child, and to comfort and encourage it by her presence, could revile her and say, see that unnatural mother holding her child while a barbarous surgeon mangles its tender limbs. Now, one does not like this language from the mother of revolutions. One does not like to hear this pious horror recommended by a revolution, with twenty others in its belly; a revolution which is like a certain piece of fire-work, that bursts in its ascent, and showers down a multitude of others. There is something in the boasted title of pacificator so ludicrous, that it excites contempt. It is like the cant slang so much in use with smugglers, robbers, and gypsies. With such people, smuggling is called a "free trade," "skipping a hedge," "moonshine," and "running away at night." I remember a set of thieves in Suffolk, who called every sort of plunder of the revenue, "hiding." So when the first consul marches 40,000 men into Switzerland, he calls it "settling their affairs." When he invaded Egypt, in breach of treaty with the Porte, he called it chastising the rebellious pachas. If any oppose his measures, they are called disturbers of the peace; but his soldiers and partisans are all supporters of order. The Romans, too, had something of this language — "Ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant." We are a little cured of the mania in this country, which was only an octave higher, when we were told, that those who advised the war were men delighting in blood, while those who opposed them were lovers of peace. Not being in an official situation, I am not sufficiently informed to advise particularly; but on such a question, I think we should weigh well in what situation we shall be when the war shall come upon us, for come it will, and sooner than I wish to say. I think it would be the wiser way to anticipate the blow; but this is more than is necessary for me to enter into, as that is for ministers to determine. We should not, moreover, let out of our hands any of the means which accident or precaution has left in them for another war. I admit this may lead to a war; but, taking into consideration our hope of advantage from war's delay, and the chance of our being in a worse situation by its speedy commencement, I have no hesitation to declare for the latter; and so little chance is there of the peace improving our situation, that we are not authorised to purchase delay upon such terms. Now, one of these terms has been alluded to, namely, co-operation upon the continent; a hope, whimsical enough, when the treaty of Amiens is allowed to be a renunciation of the continent. But if it be a little unreasonable to hold this language, and to entertain these hopes, it is surely still more unreasonable to say, "formerly we interfered for your advantage, and struck the first blow, when we were farthest from the danger; now, when the danger is close at hand to us, do you begin first." If we are waiting for a co-operation on such terms, it will never happen. We should begin and set the example. Had we done so, we should now see in Europe a vigour and energy that do not at present exist. The Italian republic would not have been erected, Piedmont would not have been annexed to France, nor would Switzerland have been over-run. None of these could have happened, not even the settling of the indemnities, as it is called, or, properly speaking, the partitioning and dividing Germany among the partisans of France, in furtherance of her ambition, and the destruction of the German empire. It might, Sir, also have had its effect even in France; new circumstances might have taken place, a new combination might have arisen in that country, outraged and indignant at last by such rapacious and inordinate ambition. But no power upon the continent will or can be expected to

Digitized by Google

stir till they hear Great Britain declare herself, till they see her in a state fairly and fully to co-operate with them. The hon. gentleman, while he has been preaching unconditional cowardly submission to France, has been holding up the point of honour; this is a popular tone, which, however, I will take much lower than he does. I could have wished, indeed, his principle had been lower, and his practice higher. Sir, I put the point of honour out of the question very much. I will not push it to a wild, extravagant, chivalrous excess; for national honour, when rightly understood, is, generally speaking, nothing more than national interest. In general there is nothing dishonourable in giving up this thing or that, when it is not disadvantageous to the national interest. But there is another point which seems not to have entered into the hon. gentleman's contemplation; I mean the point of national safety. Sir, if France is to be suffered to continue this career; if she is to be permitted to extend this system of aggrandisement and encroachment unopposed; if we are to look upon it with apathy, and mark its progress with base and cowardly indifference, what can we expect but that, when she has attained these objects of her ambition upon the continent, she will immediately fall upon and attack us? It is on that ground that I say, retain those things which we have still in our possession, as arms in our hands for defence and protection. Sir, no man is more an advocate than I am, in all ordinary and quiet times, for the nation's placing a just confidence in its representatives, and in his majesty's ministers. But circumstances of an extraordinary nature may arise: occasions of uncommon magnitude may occur, in which the nation should deliver its opinion, not by force, not in the way recommended by the lovers of revolutions, but by the expression of the sentiments of the enlightened part of the community. Such circumstances have arisen, such an occasion presents itself now. Sir, I doubt whether it would be in the power of any administration to save the country from ruin, without the close and strict co-operation of the country itself, founded upon a deep sense of the difficulties by which we are surrounded; a deep conviction of the dangers to which the country is exposed; difficulties and dangers, such as they have never experienced before. Unless the tide turns, unless the current runs the other way, unless the breeze springs up, we cannot expect, by our sweeps, to be carried off the rocks. The country must aid the government. Do we want arguments? Do we want appeals to any or every class? To the generous—to the liberal—to the patriotic—to the high minded, we have arguments for all. The interest of posterity, the grand and noble feelings of our natures, all call upon us loudly, imperiously. I would appeal, Sir, to that party, for which I cannot be suspected of having much affection—I mean the Jacobins. I would appeal to them. Bad as my opinion is of them, I do not suppose them all to be made up and compounded of wicked elements. Many may be led away by inflamed representations, by exaggerated statements, by too highly-coloured pictures, by heated imaginations—many may be led away by their very virtues. To the Jacobins I would appeal, not as lovers of social order, of good government, of monarchy, but as men of spirit, as lovers of what they call liberty, as men of hot and proud blood—I would ask them if they are content to be put under the yoke, and crushed by France? I would say to them, that France might annihilate our monarchy, our aristocracy, destroy our church—all good events in their estimation; but after she had effected this, what would she do? They would pass under the yoke of men who would treat them exactly in the same way in which they had treated those whom they had destroyed. I would put it to them, whether it was consistent with their spirit to be made such instruments and engines? I would persuade them, that this species of revolution would put us into the hands of France; a state of liberty which they would not wish to see realized, because it would be a situation in which they would become nothing. To another class of persons, the inactive and the inert; to those who think only of their own interests, who console themselves with the idea, that trade will last long enough to make their fortunes; to such men, if there be men of that description, I would say, what security have you that these hopes will be realized? I would ask them, what security they have that the change will not come on so rapidly as to crush them on a sudden? Sir, we must not argue from any thing that has before happened. We are in the metaphysics of politics, as we were before

Digitized by Google

in the metaphysics of jurisprudence. Formerly, certain points were taken for granted. We knew that there must be gradations; that as the oak was a hundred years in arriving at its maturity, it must be a certain period in going to decay. But this knowledge will be of no use to us under the present circumstances. The evil may overtake us rapidly, suddenly. We must therefore be *aut Cæsar aut nullus*—we cannot stand still. If they reduce us to the situation in which Spain is, or even Prussia, if they get us into a state in which we cannot stir, what must we expect will be our fate? To that situation of insult and danger, to that precipice are we rushing with hasty steps. In the wild vagaries of their hatred, it is impossible for us to know what they would do, should they get us into their power. Do not let us be sure that we should be treated upon the footing of the most favoured nation. Sir, this country has risen to its present state, not so much by its soil or its situation, as by the energies of its people; but these energies, this vigour, they will not suffer to subsist if they should ever be able to command them. Let us not suppose that they would not crush us, if they could ever get us down. What would they care, though the island should not be half so productive as it is? They would have satisfied their hatred; they would have satiated their vengeance; they would have crippled our energies, broken our spirit, and reduced our firm and manly bodies to shrunk and shapeless skeletons. To men of the description I have mentioned, I would address such arguments as these. But at all events I would have the country declare its mind, that we may be prepared whenever that period comes, when the alternative of war shall be deemed better than a continuance of servile submission, and when we shall think it incumbent upon us to change the timidity of the flying hare, for the courage and attitude of the indignant lion. Sir, I hope that in such a case we should find the country true to its ancient character. If the people catch at first nothing but an enlightened rational fear, we may hope it will soon be followed by manly spirit; but never can we hope to save the country, but by making them sensible of the full extent of the danger—it is with a view to this that I hope ministers will form and shape their own conduct. If they show by their measures that they mean to expiate the sins they have committed, I, for one, shall heartily and openly applaud them. Whether they will raise their minds to such a height—whether they will expand in the trial and burst, I know not; but at least I trust they will do their duty; at least I hope they will not suffer themselves to descend with execration to posterity; that they will not consent to be handed down as the *Augustuli* who have precipitated the country to its ruin.—Sir, there are many points which I have touched but lightly, others that I have not touched at all. But farther opportunities will be furnished me for discussing them. It is, indeed, a deep sense of the calamities of our situation that has induced me to trespass upon your time so long. A deep sense that the country is going down—that it is almost settling in the water—that the power of France is growing fast round us—that we are dying by a complication of disorders, both chronic and acute; by disorders, some of which are less rapid in their operation than others; we may be cut off by a blow at once. From such an effect may we be defended by a sacrifice of that system, an abandonment of those principles, upon which his majesty's ministers have acted, feeling, as they must do, that we have this complication of diseases! Sir, I trust the country will express its feelings, founded upon its reason; it cannot be blind to the danger—it cannot be ignorant of the causes that have produced it. This, Sir, is my advice; it is an admonition which belongs to the situation in which we are; for fatal, indeed, would it have been if the address had been suffered to pass without any such observations being made as those I have found it necessary to submit to you. I could have wished they had come from a person of more weight, for made they must be. Sir, unless the House see the danger as I see it, unless exertions and sacrifices be made such as we have never seen before, unless we abandon all those low-minded and ignoble ideas, the country must be inevitably hurried on to its ruin. I recollect, with peculiar force, the last dying quiver, the last words almost that dropped from the great lord Chatham before he fainted in the House of Lords. I was present at the melancholy scene.* His last words (they were coarse and homely, but, coming from such a man, they derived, perhaps, a peculiar vigour even from their coarse-

* See vol. 19, p. 1027.

Digitized by Google

ness), his last words, when some submission was spoken of—a submission trifling when compared with what we are called upon to make at present, — were, "sooner than consent to such a measure, I would pawn the shirt off my back." Sir, that expression, with the weight and authority of such a name, conveys what I feel upon the present crisis.

Mr. *Fox*, in explanation, said, Sir, the right hon. gentleman has throughout his speech misrepresented my meaning; but as he did not quote my words, I have not an opportunity of pointing out the particular instances of misrepresentation. I never said that the power of France was not formidable; on the contrary, I said that no man in England could feel more strongly, or regretted more, that aggrandisement. I do feel it, and I charge that aggrandisement upon the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues, as a calamity for which they are gravely responsible to their country. That right hon. gentleman and his colleagues have contributed more to augment the power of France, than any member of the House of Bourbon, or any general of the French republic. I did not say that I was for peace on any terms, and purchased by any submission. I recommended peace as most consonant to the true honour and to the true interests of the nation.

Mr. *Windham*—I certainly did not intend to misrepresent the hon. gentleman. I did not quote his words; I spoke only of the general tenor of his speech, and tendency of his opinions.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington*: — Sir, I cannot hear it said, that we are running rapidly the race of ruin, and that we are hurrying to destruction, without making some observations upon such expressions. I will not for a moment allow myself to think that opinions so disheartening, so discouraging, so incompatible, and so unworthy of a just comparison of the situation of France, much as I lament that situation, with the situation of Great Britain, are entertained by many men. The right hon. gentleman has said, that his majesty's ministers have committed sins which they ought to expiate: The hon. gentleman opposite me has expressed a hope that we shall act in such a manner as not to repent having put an end to the war, by such a peace. Sir, I rise not to be the apologist of that transaction. If I am a delinquent, I am a hardened one; for I never reflect upon the share I had in restoring peace to my country, but with the most heartfelt satisfaction. Nay, I do not scruple to add, that even if encroachments or insults offered to the country, should again lead to hostilities, still that calamity will not destroy that satisfaction; for I should know that I had done my duty, and that I had no cause to reproach myself with subsequent events. The right hon. gentleman has said, that any man who had died fourteen years ago, and should be restored to life now, would not be able to know Europe in its present state. No man looks with more regret than I do at that situation; but at the same time no one recollects with more pride the general system of policy which this country has adopted during that eventful period. But I would ask, whether the policy of France, fourteen years ago, did not justify our entertaining a jealousy of her? I wish to know whether, except in Holland and Portugal, the influence of France upon the powers of Europe was not always greater than ours? Not that I mean to say her influence was so great as it is now; but though she has extended her territories, would it not be shallow reasoning to say that she has extended her influence in the same proportion? If we look back to the history of the country and the continent for the last century, we shall see a series of conflicts and negotiations, the consequence of the aggrandisement and encroachments of France. After the spirit manifested by Louis 14th, did king William enter into war singly? Did we enter into war singly at subsequent periods—in the year 1734, and during the Seven Years war? At what period of our history did we place ourselves in a state of hostility to France, to avoid those evils now stated by the right hon. gentleman? Surely he cannot have taken the pains to investigate the subject, which I should have thought he would have done. He has alluded to the supposed reduced state of our establishment. Sir, I am surprised to hear this brought forward as an accusation against us. The fact is, that the army is double now what it was in the year 1784, the year after the peace; and that no reduction has taken place in the establishment of the infantry, except in the disembodying the militia. There has, indeed, been a reduction in the cavalry; but the amount of that establishment is still double what it was in 1792, the year before the commencement

Digitized by Google

the war. Our naval establishment ounted in 1786, to 115 ships of war: amounts now to 207. In 1792 we l 18,000 seamen employed; we have v 46,000. We had, in the former iod, 23 sail of the line in commission; have now 35. There is another point on which gentlemen have expressed a ibt, which I am happy to be able to ivert into a certainty—I mean with pect to the effect of the peace upon commerce, manufactures, and re- iue. Our foreign export trade for the ir 1801 was 23 millions. Our export de from the 5th Oct. 1801, to the 5th t. 1802, has amounted to 27,500,000*l.* ith respect to the revenue, this has been ear of unexampled produce. I was ught to be too sanguine, when I took growing produce of the consolidated id for three quarters to the 5th April 03, at 4,500,000*l.* I am happy to state, it in two quarters it has amounted to 00,000*l.* The floating debt, which s 38,000,000*l.* has been reduced to ,000,000*l.* and on the 5th January next, outstanding floating debt will be little re than 14,000,000*l.* including the 00,000*l.* advanced by the Bank for ir charter, which must be repaid; and 00,000*l.* navy bills. The right hon. ntleman has dwelt upon the difficulties d dangers in which he supposes us to involved: but he has not vouchsafed tell us, how a state of war is likely to nedy those evils. I believe he will find difficult to satisfy this House, that a ite of war will best conduce to our in- nal safety. Sir, the principle upon ich his majesty's ministers advised the nclusion of peace was, that in the then ite of the continent, no reasonable hope mained of being able to abridge the power France; that it would not, therefore, be wise to husband our resources, in order at if we should again unhappily be call- upon, we might either be able to co- erate with effect with the continental wers, or furnish the means by which ey might be called into vigorous action. must contend, therefore, Sir, that the untry closed the contest with honour, eserving its constitution, the integrity its empire, and making, besides, some luable accessions of territory. To re- w the war, upon such grounds as e have heard stated by the right hon. ntleman, would be to renew it upon the osest inconsistency. Sir, I have re- arked a strong disposition in many per- sons to charge the government with acting upon too pacific a system. This imputation results from an unwarrantable suspicion, and I think I may say that my declaration is entitled to as much credit as their suspicions, as long as there is no proof that they are well founded. I aver then, that in no one instance has the honour or credit of the country been committed by his majesty's ministers. Under the present circumstances, I look at the state of the public opinion and feelings with very different ideas from what I should do if I coincided in sentiment with the right hon. gentleman. Sir, I do in my conscience believe that the nation anxiously wishes for the continuance of peace, but is not afraid of war—it hopes the best, but desires to be prepared for the worst—that it will not suffer any unworthy compromise of its honour; but that it will not permit any impassioned feelings and exaggerated representations to bear down what is due to prudence. There can be, there is no disposition to lay the country at the feet of France. But I do see a disposition in some men to work upon the feelings of the people, to inflame their passions, to rouse their resentment, and by these feelings to force the two countries into hostilities without any definite motive. This is a danger against which I wish to guard the country and the House. I am convinced that the great body of the reflecting community will afford their support to his majesty's ministers, if they show that they will watch over any infringement of the honour of the sovereign and the country; but that they will not suffer themselves to be led by impassioned feelings into the calamities of war. Sir, I have no hesitation in confessing, that I consider war as a dreadful evil. But dreadful as is that evil, I shall never hesitate between the alternative of the sacrifice of our honour and war.

Mr. *Thomas Grenville* said, that his sentiments, with regard to the present address, exactly coincided with those of Mr. Windham. The chancellor of the exchequer had opposed to solid reasoning nothing but minute statements. He had begged the question. His details of the revenue were no answer to his right hon. friend's arguments. The chancellor of the exchequer had affected to look upon the makers and approvers of the peace as equally pledged to its maintenance; but for his part he thought they were to be

Digitized by Google

regarded in a very different light. The approvers of the peace had only approved of it on certain assurances being given them that it would produce certain beneficial consequences. These assurances, however, had completely failed; and therefore they were no longer bound to persist in their support of it. The fact was, that the treaty of peace had not been properly discussed: he did not mean the detail of it, but the tone and temper in which it was made. The tone had been taken on the mere word of ministers, and it was now found that they had been completely deceived themselves, or had deceived others. The treaty, in truth, was no sooner signed, than the disposition of the French government was found to be very different from what ministers had affected to believe it; and that disposition has continued to discover itself more and more plainly. No sooner was the treaty signed in May, than close upon the back of this we heard of Piedmont being to be annexed to France. In August was brought to light the plan agreed upon between France and Russia, for the destruction of the Germanic body. In this act it had been stated, that we were not concerned; but had not a part of the electorate of Hanover been torn from us, to solder the indemnities? The unhappy fate of the Swiss attracted our attention in in September; and in October, the duchy of Parma was formally and irrevocably annexed to France. Such were the indications of the pacific temper of the first consul. The House then was absolved, the nation was absolved, from its former consent to the treaty, as that consent was only procured by misrepresentation. The very words of the address were sufficient to show that the sentiments of administration were now changed. A powerful military establishment is recommended, and the tendency of this measure could not be doubtful. It was in this view that he gave his concurrence to the address.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that the terms of the address on the peace which had been alluded to, had not been accurately quoted. His majesty was called upon in it to employ that vigilance which the state of Europe demanded, not to proceed to act immediately upon every alteration of the *status quo*. The state of things, he confessed, was much more unsatisfactory than it was when the definitive treaty was signed. The hon. gentleman wished for an active interference in consequence of recent events; but had those events altered the maritime or colonial power and influence of France; and what else could render such an interference political or indeed just? Events had certainly taken place on the continent injurious to our policy, but not so much so as to the policy of other states; and it was not for us singly to make an attack for interest which concerned us least. An hon. member had supposed that his noble friend (lord Hawkesbury) had admitted, that a remonstrance had been made relative to Switzerland; but it could not with propriety be concluded from any thing he had said, that such an interference had taken place. He only said, hypothetically, that those who objected so hastily and violently to the conduct of his majesty's ministers did not know that they had not interfered. His lordship proceeded to observe, that proving to all Europe, as we had done, our sincere desire of peace, we should enter into a new war with double advantages. Had we continued the war (said he) on the reasoning of the hon. gentleman's friends, we should have lost our energy, the country would not have gone with us. Another advantage likewise has resulted from the peace; the country now sees that its trade and prosperity do not depend on war. The experiment has been tried, and has shown that the resources of the nation are firmly established both in peace and war. It has been urged, that my noble friend (lord Hawkesbury) positively said, that all continental alliance was at an end; but he did not mean to express the dispiriting idea, that no circumstances, or time, could revive the spirit of vigour on the continent; he only intended to state, that all the continental powers having made a separate peace, no farther aid or concurrence could be expected from them. With respect to the present state of this country, it is the determination of ministers to place the peace establishment on the most efficient footing; and should any adverse events render it necessary for us again to have recourse to war, I cannot doubt but the spirit and resources of the nation will enable us to repel every danger with which we may be threatened.

Lord *Hawkesbury* also explained. He had observed, he said, that the House would be prepared to defend our honour and essential interests if attacked; but, as to interference with the continent, it must

Digitized by Google

depend on the consideration of many circumstances, upon the support we should receive, and the chance of success. He observed, that he had not spoken of the temper of the treaty, but of the tone, the time, and the terms. By the tone was meant, that tone of equality, which should prevail between independent states, and the absence of revolting and degrading conditions, besides the terms.

Mr. *Whitbread* said, he should vote for the address, though he was considerably alarmed by what he had heard from ministers. Those who disapproved the peace, acted consistently in now wishing for war; but those who had made the peace, while France was in possession of Piedmont and Switzerland, and who had not then made the slightest stipulation, in regard either to Switzerland or Sardinia, would act inconsistently if they were to break the treaty on such grounds. However he admired the abilities and lively imagination of a right hon. gentleman, he could not agree with him in his reasoning, when he supposed France would increase much faster in power during peace than in time of war. The fact was otherwise: at the first effort at negociation, France was content to cede Belgium; at the second she refused to give it up; at the third her pretensions were still higher; the fourth attempt was, when Buonaparté sent overtures of peace, which, in an evil hour, were rejected; and during the war France had enormously increased in power. She had not made an equal progress in peace. He hoped peace was not likely to be soon broken, and he lamented that language tending to inspire such a belief should have been so inconsiderately used.

The Address was then agreed to.

Nov. 24. The Address being reported to the House,

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, he was desirous of delivering a few observations on the important subject before the House, the more especially, as certain sentiments of his had been alluded to, by a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Canning) on the preceding night. The sentiments which he had uttered at the time adverted to, were such as he was ready to avow. The Address seemed to him to speak the language which it was proper for the House to hold, for it was not right to push matters to extremity with regard to continental affairs: there was a propriety in saying, on the part of his majesty, that we should keep our eyes on the affairs of the continent, and be ready to take such measures as circumstances might require; and that was properly assented to in the address. If any thing gave suspicion to him in this matter, it was an allusion to the standing policy of this country, which, upon a careful and attentive perusal of the matter, and much reflection, he had formed an opinion upon which he was not likely, on a sudden, to abandon. It was this, that that House and this country had been far too forward to engage in war and continental connexions; to enter into engagements, the full extent of which we could not foresee, and many of which had been to the highest degree, injurious to this country, having wasted much of its blood and treasure, and that without procuring, in return, the least benefit to us. Therefore, if he were to take the speech in the spirit of a special pleader, he should doubt how far the words of it, or the address upon the subject of the policy he alluded to, was right; but, in a general sense, he had no difficulty in expressing his approbation of the sentiments it contained. But it had been said, that he had uttered, on a former occasion, a sentiment purporting that in no circumstances ought this country to form any continental connexion; a sentiment which he never did utter, nor did he believe he ever should utter it, for it was going to an extreme which he never approved; it being his persuasion that almost all good policy lay between extreme points on either side, as most virtue was said to be in a medium; but he had no difficulty in saying, that, under the present circumstances of this country, it would be wise in us to pause before we renewed any continental alliance or connexion: for if the experience of the last ten years had not made us at least diffident upon these projects, it must have been most unhappily thrown away. He hoped, therefore, we should, in the language of the address, keep our eyes on what was going forward. It was, indeed, desirable that we should prevent France by land, as well as by sea, from extending her power; but then we were to look to expediency, and not depend on any speculations of statesmen. Need he say any thing on the shortsightedness of men? How had the greatest and the wisest of men been deceived in their conjectures! How had their speculations been turned into foolishness! Indeed some of the most profound politicians had overlooked things

Digitized by Google

which men of the plainest, and almost meanest capacities had foreseen. And here he was led to remember a very eloquent speech which his noble friend (lord Hawkesbury) made in that House, and which could not be too much admired, as it gave earnest of those great talents which had since been exercised in the service of his country. He could not help, however, reflecting on the miscarriages which may attend the schemes of all those who are accustomed to a great chain of political combinations in their thoughts and sentiments. The speech of his noble friend, although he most unaffectedly admired the knowledge it displayed, as well as brilliancy, on the occasion to which he alluded, naturally occurred to him, when he was considering of human foresight, especially on the events likely to arise out of the policy of states. The truth of the matter was this: politicians calculated on the continuance of the operation of certain causes, and a given number of events; when one of these events happened to be altered, the whole combination was at an end, and with it, of course, all the reasoning that was built upon such combination; nay, the whole system built upon such a combination might be reversed by one event. The whole state of a great number of things might be altered by a single event: so that after a great deal of speculation and political sagacity, we had discovered that all the trouble we had taken, might have been very well spared, and the country have saved vast quantities of blood and treasure. The cost might have been well employed in the improvement, instead of the destruction of mankind. He illustrated this by adverting to the circumstances at the peace of Utrecht, of which the danger, at one time so much apprehended, shifted at once, by a single accident, and changed the whole complexion of political affairs, as they regarded the house of Austria, Spain and France; and which, from threatening all Europe with the horrors of war, produced a peace for thirty years, in which we were united with France for five years. Whether any policy might again unite us, he could not say, but that was not impossible. Upon these topics there was abundant matter for discussion, to shew how little human calculation was to be depended upon in the affairs of states, and how much was the mere effect of accident, that is to say, upon events which human foresight could not penetrate. These were considerations which ought to make us cautious in relying on the advantages of continental connexions, which might depend on a combination of numerous events. It had been said of him, that he had uttered a sentiment which had about it perhaps some unseasonable merriment, nor was it totally without its sober sadness. The phrase that conveyed the sentiment he alluded to was this: "that the people of this country are too honest to have much to do with continental connexions." His right hon. friend (Mr. Canning), who had animadverted on that expression, ought to have made some allowance for his situation. He had occasion to go home to his constituents, and to address them on the subject of their pressure; for such must be the effect of every war to such a class as his constituents, and particularly in the last war. He therefore ought to have some indulgence in speaking as the representative of such a class of persons as his constituents were. It was not unreasonable to say, that we wanted to recruit our strength, which was much wasted both in blood and treasure; and therefore, if he made use of an odd expression, it was not matter of great blame. But the truth of the matter was this: he had no apology to make for the expression which had been so quoted and animadverted upon; and he was so far from making any apology for the assertion, that he was now about to repeat and affirm it; and it was a sentence to which he called the attention of the House, and particularly that of his majesty's ministers. He said again, that the people of this country are too honest to have much to do with continental connexions. He said this, because *we* are always faithful to our engagements, *they* almost always faithless to us; at least always so when it appears to them to suit their interests; for it was part of the general system of the policy of the continent to pay no attention to political engagements, when it is in the least degree convenient to neglect them. Of the truth of this there were many instances; a striking one was that of the Pragmatic Sanction, in which, in the course of a few years, every power engaged in it deserted its engagement, England alone excepted. As to the last three we had had with France, to use the strong language of another person, the ink which recorded these engagements, was hardly dry when they meditated a breach of them. In a word, the principle on the continent

‡

Digitized by Google

seemed to be, that of paying no attention to political engagements for a moment longer than an observance of them was convenient. Seeing this, and feeling the effect of it, he would ask, whether it was too much to say, that the people of England ought to be cautious in the engagements which they enter into? We certainly ought to be cautious in these things; for we must keep our engagements whether they be convenient or not, whatever others may do with their's He entreated the House to consider, what was likely to be the result of a confederacy with any of the powers which we had already been engaged with. We had been engaged in as powerful a confederacy as ever was formed, and upon a subject as interesting as ever was contemplated by any state; and on the part of some of the confederates, the ties of consanguinity were added to those of general policy; for Austria had family motives in the confederacy. Russia, Prussia, Spain, Sardinia, and indeed every power in Europe, had at some time or other belonged to this great confederacy. Did not every one of these powers get out of the confederacy as soon, or, as it were, steal out of it? Nor could it be otherwise, while they were acting on views so different, that some of them were more afraid of each other, than they were of the enemy they had united to oppose. In 1797, was not the court of Vienna induced to quit us? How did that court behave towards us on that occasion? Did it discover any extraordinary fidelity towards this country? Did they give us a polite intimation, upon that occasion, of what they were about to do? No such thing. We could not know, for many months, what the treaty was between it and France. It was lodged in the breast of the Austrian cabinet; but when it came out, there was no wonder it was so long concealed; for it disclosed the utmost perfidy with regard to us. So with regard to the German indemnities, no regard was paid to any engagements with us. From all this continental policy of faithlessness, we had only to determine to embark no farther than we can see our way. He had heard it said, that among the alterations which the French had introduced, that of changing the meaning of words was one; so that now, No may be made to mean Yes, and Yes No. So that when the French say, they will guarantee the integrity of the Turkish empire for all time, they mean, they will give away part to any power they please, upon having an equivalent, and that they will keep the remainder themselves. Such was the nature of the engagements they made with states; yet we must observe ours, if we made any. He proceeded to observe on the probable effect of the new confederacy, and expressed an apprehension that it might be dissolved, as far as regarded Austria or Russia, by the granting, by France, for an equivalent of course, to either, but particularly to Russia, a certain part of Turkey; but by giving part to the one, and part to the other, both might become hostile to us. We had seen that once already, in the course of the last war; nor was a project like this unlikely to enter the head of a Russian statesman; nor was it unlikely that the parties should act upon it. What then should we do? Take care not to form any engagement, unless for present action; not to form any connexion that was to be of distant execution by powers, the good faith of whom we had reason to be diffident of; not to enter into a combination we have reason to apprehend may be dissolved without any regard to our interests, and that we had reason to be diffident of. He called on the House to infer, from the experience of the last 14 years of continental affairs in particular. He then proceeded to take a view of the policy which it was the real interest of this country to pursue, and differed totally from the sentiments which had been expressed by Mr. Windham upon that subject. The right hon. gentleman had declared that, upon a full view of our situation, war appeared to him to be the better course of the two. Now he would ask what we could expect from war? In the last war we had taken all that was takeable, if he might be allowed the expression. And what could we do but take again what we had agreed to give up? And what should we be the better if another peace was agreed to within 50 miles of Vienna, or at the capital? What could we get by prolonging the war? What could we hope more than to be put into the situation in which we were at the conclusion of the peace? Were the people of this country so ready to burst with prosperity as to be eager for war? Or did it appear, on a calm view of our situation, that a war was necessary for us at this moment? He apprehended not, and he could not help thinking, that were it not for some immoveable preju-

Digitized by Google

dice of Mr. Windham, a man of his enlarged understanding could not see political events and affairs in the light he did. Before we were engaged again in war, we should look at our revenue, and see that it be improved: we should look the whole of our situation in the face—look at and provide against all our dangers; attend to the dearest interest of our country; but we should consider wherein that interest consists. Let us remember, that, dear as are army and navy, our revenue, our trade, and our commerce, and all our resources, that yet above all our army, above all our navy—that was to say, above all our soldiers—ay, and above all our sailors too—above all our commerce, and above all our wealth, and the preparation which that wealth enabled us to make, there was one more important than all the rest to a free country, and that was the disposition of the people, that was, that its government should possess the hearts of the people; but he begged leave to warn ministers against the possible event of creating a clamour for war, by exciting the resentment of the people against some detestable acts of tyranny in another power, and of taking advantage of it, to involve the country in war; the effects of which, when the people began to reflect, would be dismal. He entreated that they would, as far as possible, inform the people of their situation; give a right feeling of their danger; observing, that if they hurried on the people to war, without this caution, they would deserve the severest censure; and, he had almost said, the execration of their countrymen. He thought that ministers acted on the true policy of this country, by endeavouring to restore to it the blessings of peace. He hoped they would turn their thoughts to all species of internal improvements, to the economy, to reformation of abuses, to the improvement of the education of youth, as the best way to improve morals, to the redress of all species of grievances, as the best way to continue the attachment of the whole people to that constitution and state of things, that rendered us at once the admiration of the whole world, and marked us out as a people enjoying the greatest blessing it had yet pleased Providence to bestow on mankind—a government, under which liberty was enjoyed, and property protected, and all the comforts of human life better secured, than any other age or country had yet felt. With all these blessings, and with all this power to preserve them and sense to enjoy them, he could not help wishing that we might try the advantages of peace, and avail ourselves of them, and shun all indefinite continental connexions; above all, to enter into no engagements hastily or precipitately, on the ground of any supposed readiness in the public for hostility, on account of some recent instances of flagrant injustice. He wished rather to obtain the sentiments of the middle class of society, who, generally speaking, were the best informed, and who had and who felt an immediate and direct identity of interest with the public at large—a class of men whose opinion, although never neglected in this country, had not perhaps all the weight it deserved. He concluded with observing, that if this course was taken by government, we should have nothing to fear from the enormous size of the French republic. What if they were 50 millions of men—did that constitute the strength of the chief consul of France? Rather his weakness, if left to themselves; for multitudes of them must hate the system by which they are become subject to their present yoke. Time, therefore, would remove all apprehension in this respect. It was natural to expect, that if this unwieldy mass was left to itself, it would, in time, change its condition—it could not be otherwise; for moral causes were certain of their effects, whereas the effect of human policy was always uncertain. The way to produce the dissolution of this mighty power was, to leave it to its own course; the way to unite it, was to attack it by hostile force.

General *Gascoyne* said, he apprehended there was some mistake in the representation given of our common prosperity. That description did not apply to the most important branch of all, he meant the West India islands. Since the conclusion of peace, a pressure had fallen with great severity on the carrying trade particularly, which diminished it at this time one third of its former value.

Mr. *Elliot* said, he should not consume the time of the House by an apology for presuming to ask its indulgence. He had been so little in the habit of public discussion, and felt so unfeigned a reluctance, to engage in it, that nothing could have induced him to trespass on its patience, short of the circumstances of the alarming crisis in which it was assembled—a crisis which filled him with considerations, that,

‡

Digitized by Google

he acknowledged, almost superseded and overwhelmed the ordinary emotions of personal embarrassment. All other feelings seemed to fade and die away before these great and primary interests, which must, at the present conjuncture, have seized and fastened themselves on the minds and apprehensions of all men. It was not whether one spoke with a little more or a little less reputation: that was not in the class of reflections which occurred at such a period. It was, whether our nearest and dearest concerns were not at stake. It was for the landed interest to consider, whether the security of their inheritance was not shaken; it was for those engaged in commercial life to consider, whether they were likely long to remain in the safe enjoyment of the well-earned fruits of their industry. The stoutest and boldest hearts around him could not look at the present awful state of public affairs without harbouring a doubt, whether that whole system of relations called our country was not on the very edge of irretrievable ruin. With these impressions, he could not reconcile it to himself to depart from this second discussion in perfect silence. If ever there was a period which called for discussion, if ever there was a conjuncture which demanded the deliberative voice of every man endued with a public trust, surely it was the present. In that hour of peril it behoved us to sift our situation to the bottom, to endeavour to trace to its source the danger to which we stood exposed; to examine whether it proceeded from a fundamental error in our system, or from erroneous measures accompanying that system, or from causes independent of both. It was our bounden duty to unveil the danger, not only to ourselves, but to the country, to show it in its nature and quality, and in its full extent, that we might apportion our efforts to the exigencies which required them, that we might turn from us the danger, if human prudence could avert it; or that, if we should be obliged to meet it, we might encounter it with the firmness that became us; and above all, that we might prove to the enemy (if enemy we had) and to the world, that we were still in the unimpaired possession of that true, genuine, and tried resource of the empire, that persevering constancy, that unshaken resolution, and that cool and determined courage, which had ever distinguished the British people, when summoned to assert the honour, the character, the safety, and the independence of their country. With this view of his duty, he should take the liberty of adverting to the events that had occurred on the continent since the close of the last parliament. Within that short space of time, a period of only a few months, we had been taught a very awful and impressive lesson: we had learnt that France could conquer in peace as well as in war; states and a whole empire had fallen before her. A new revolution had been accomplished on the continent of Europe, which he could not help regarding as little less affecting the interests of this country than an internal convulsion would have been—he meant the dissolution of the Germanic body. In truth, no person who had cast his eye on the map of Europe, or who was conversant with history, or who had heard of the equilibrium of power, could be ignorant that the German empire was the very balance of the scale. The political evil of this transaction was not the only calamity arising from it. It was impossible for us to turn our eyes from the moral mischief of it. No man could behold the overthrow of property, titles, and honours; the abolition of archbishoprics, bishoprics, and corporations, both ecclesiastical and civil; no man could see sovereign princes transferred from one dominion to another, and subjects severed from their legitimate rulers, without feeling that all those opinions, habits, prejudices, and principles, which constitute the foundation of civil government and social order, were shaken to their base. All this, too, had been done under the auspices and influence of a power, which, it was ever to be remembered, was itself founded on the recognition of the violation of property. The political effect of this stupendous change was obvious: it gave to France that ascendancy in the German empire which Austria before possessed. The transaction was marked, too, by the peculiar contempt and neglect with which his Britannic majesty had been treated. The arrangement had been made without previous communication, either with the house of Austria, the legitimate head of the empire, or his Britanic majesty, who was the ally of Austria, who had recently signed a treaty of peace with France, who was a member of the Germanic body, and who was peculiarly fitted to be an arbitrator in the partition, as he was entirely disinterested in the

Digitized by Google

question of the indemnifications. It was settled by France, in conjunction with Russia, which had a very slight interest in the empire, and with Prussia, which expected indemnification in the vicinity of his majesty's Hanoverian possessions, and the troops of which had not long before, without any declaration of hostility, actually occupied Hanover; and the partition had terminated in establishing a Prussian garrison in the heart of his majesty's patrimonial territory, and with the additional contumely of extorting from his majesty a part of the indemnification for the house of Orange. It would be recollected, that, after the private convention at Amiens, between the Dutch and the French ministers, it was stated in a sort of extra-official turn of debate, that the indemnification to the stadtholder might fall upon this country. It had now actually come to pass, that a part of his indemnification had been derived from his majesty's continental dominions, and, perhaps, another potion might subsequently be drawn from Great Britain.—It had been said in the course of the discussion of last night, that the honour of the country had been saved in the terms of the peace; but he appealed to any man who should review the whole of the transaction of the indemnification of the house of Orange, whether he could lay his hand on his heart, and declare that the honour of the nation had been preserved.—He mentioned Piedmont only, because it afforded an example of the systematic advancement of French aggrandizement. During the negotiation of peace, it had been denominated a 27th military division of France; since the conclusion of the peace, it had been, by a sort of regular progression, formally annexed to the territory of France. The fate of Switzerland was too well known. It had been rumoured, that the British government had made a representation on its behalf. From what fell last night from a noble lord, and the chancellor of the exchequer, he rather understood them to have admitted discussions to have taken place on that subject, but that nothing had been done which had committed the honour of this country. Whether or not the honour of the country had been committed, was rather a matter of opinion than of declaration. He, however, conceived his noble friend (lord Castlereagh) to have said, that there had been no remonstrance. In short, the matter was involved in a mystery, which he should not attempt to develope. In argument, he should take it both ways. First, he would assume, that ministers had interfered. That they had a right, and that they were warranted by every principle of justice and policy to interfere, he had no hesitation in asserting. A more flagrant and unprovoked aggression on the rights and liberties of a brave, innocent, and injured people, than the conduct of France towards the Swiss exhibited, he believed the records of tyranny did not furnish. But though he applauded the motive, he must condemn the mode of the interposition. It ought to have been made earlier; for, unless he had a distinct and specific assurance from ministers to the contrary, he could not be convinced that the Swiss, so soon as they had determined te resist the encroachments of France, would have been so negligent of the interests of their cause, as not immediately to have communicated their intentions to the independent powers of Europe, and to the court of London among the first. In that case ministers must have been apprized of the rising spirit in Switzerland many months ago: they should, therefore, have adopted means for giving authority to their representation by a suitable armament; and they should have endeavoured to have procured a co-operation on the continent. Instead of precautions of that nature, however, they permitted Germany to be so enfeebled as to have no hope of co-operation from that quarter; and then they came forward with a remonstrance, without even the countenance and support of an adequate armament. The principal feature in the importance of Switzerland to Europe, consisted in its being a barrier to Germany; but we suffered Germany to be partitioned, and then we interposed for Switzerland. We first permitted the house to be plundered, and then we made an inefficient bluster at the door. If, as he had apprehended his noble friend to have stated, no remonstrance had been made in favour of Switzerland, he must still impute blame to ministers. There ought to have been a remonstrance, and a remonstrance made in a manner to have given it effect, and not in a way which was calculated at once to commit the dignity of the country, and to aggravate the misfortunes of the people whom it was our object to succour. If there had been no representation, it was because we were unprepared with a suitable armament to

Digitized by Google

support it. But how came we to be so unprepared? Was it possible that his majesty's ministers could have put the last hand to the treaty of Amiens without having endeavoured to acquire a knowledge of the actual relation of France with regard to other powers, as well as to ascertain her ulterior views; for instance, to ascertain whether Germany was to have been free in the arrangement of the indemnifications? If no measures had been employed to obtain some information and security on these points, we were at that moment in completete ignorance in respect to even the extent of the possessions of France. Mexico and Peru, for any thing we knew, might have been ceded to her in addition to Louisiana. But admitting that ministers had been guilty of so flagrant an omission, they could not have been insensible to that spirit of aggrandizement, by which France had been actuated during the whole course of the negotiation of peace; and they therefore should not have been unprovided with the means of meeting it in the event of the measures of the French government subsequent to the peace proving to be such as should menace the interests of this country. There had been nothing new in the system of France. Her power had, to be sure, increased with an accumulated rapidity; but the spirit of her proceedings were unchanged. It had been manifested during the negotiation in multiplied acts of fraud, insult, and violence. Had the seizure of one of the most flourishing portions of Italy, while our ambassador was waiting the pleasure of the first consul at Amiens, escaped the memory of ministers? Did they not remember how they had been imposed upon in respect to the limits of Portuguese Guiana? how they had been cheated in the instance of Louisiana? how they had been deceived about Elba? Could they have forgot the trick practised on the Turkish minister at Paris, and the diplomatic manœuvre, which the noble secretary of state himself had experienced, in regard to that article of the preliminaries which related to the evacuation of Egypt? He trusted, that neither the ministers, nor the parliament, could suffer to be erased from their recollection that memorable interval, during which this country had been held up to the scorn and derision of Europe. He was persuaded that most of the members of the late parliament, who had voted for the peace, had considered it in a great degree as an experiment; and he was convinced that none of them (at least he meant with very few exceptions) would have given it their sanction, if it could have entered into their contemplation that his majesty's ministers would have immediately begun to deport themselves as if the trial had been made, and the result had been successful; if, for example, they could have imagined that our establishments would have been diminished, before it could have been ascertained whether the conduct of France was likely to be such as might afford a rational hope of repose for Europe, and before she had evinced any disposition to reduce the scale of her own establishments. It was his firm belief, that no man in that House (always excepting a very few of very eccentric opinions) would have conferred his approbation on the treaty, could he have foreseen that such a system of measures would have followed it. That the fixed, uniform, and rooted purpose of France, was the establishment of universal empire, if other proofs than her conduct were requisite, was evinced by publications which had lately appeared in the Moniteur. He might be told, that newspapers were not to be considered as authentic documents, that they might be disavowed; but if the newspaper to which he alluded should be disavowed, could any person in the House credit the disavowal? It was notorious that the press in France was in a state of the most abject subjection to the government, and the Moniteur was a paper which bore the title of official. It was, therefore, highly improbable that any paragraph should be inserted in it, which had not the sanction of the French government; but it was absolutely impossible that a second publication should appear in it without the direct approbation of consular authority. It was the second he should quote, partly because it contained a concise description of the present situation and views of France, and partly because it was desirable in a transaction between adverse parties, such as the treaty of peace, to discover the sentiments of both parties in respect to it; and the last publication declared the consular opinion of that instrument. He should read only what was essential to his purpose: "What is the interest of France? It is, to have none but good neighbours and sure friends: in the South, the king of Spain, the ally of France, from inclination as well as from interest, and the Italian and

Digitized by Google

Ligurian republics, which enter into her federative system: Switzerland, the duke of Bavaria, the good prince of Baden, the king of Prussia, Holland, to the north and east."—"Every thing has returned to its natural state, into that state which on all sides will exhibit the fine territory of France surrounded by friendly people." Such friendly people, continued Mr. E., as were contained in the new states, which had been created by the late partition of Germany, and which, being in complete subservience to France, were so many forts and garrisons on her frontier, answering the purpose either of aggression or defence. The paragraph then proceeded to state, "That situation is the result of ten years triumphs, of hazards, of labours, and immense sacrifices." Europe, he said, seemed to be described by the chief consul as a fine estate, with eligible appendages and circumstances: and what were the titles, what the deeds of conveyance to that estate? "The peace of Luneville, the preliminaries of London, and the peace of Amiens, far from having changed it, have consolidated it." Here we had the testimony of consular authority, that when the noble secretary of state signed the preliminaries of London, and when his majesty's ministers concluded the treaty of Amiens, they had established and consolidated the domination of France; and so he solemnly protested he believed they had. He then proceeded to touch on the topics of consolation which had been offered. Of consolation, he said, he stood so much in need, that he should catch with avidity at any ray of it that might be shown to him: one was, the extinction of the danger of Jacobinism. It had been alleged, that Jacobinism was suppressed in France; and he did, indeed, believe, that no one dare utter a seditious sentence, or write a seditious paragraph against the government there; but with the determined malignity which the prime consul bore to this nation, he saw nothing which justified him in flattering himself that Buonaparté would neglect to avail himself of any seditious combinations which might exist either in England or Ireland, for the subversion of the British empire; and it must be admitted, that the intercourse of peace was calculated to mature a system of organization with greater facility than it could have been carried on in war. He really knew not from what source gentlemen derived their security on this head; not, he imagined, from the band of Irish traitors who were now at Paris, not from the illustrious instance of Napper Tandy, whose name he could not mention without remarking, that, had he been vested with the power, he would have pardoned him. He was, to be sure, a traitor, and had been convicted on the clearest evidence; but he was an old man, and perfectly insignificant: he was, in truth, an extinguished traitor; and though he, perhaps, could not justify the feeling, he must repeat, he would certainly have spared his life. But he must add, that if, after his pardon, it had been even whispered or insinuated that the French government had expressed a solicitude for his release, he would have taken care that he should not have been permitted to retire to France; and if he had been suffered to go thither under such circumstances, he could not help saying it was a positive insult on the right feeling of every English and every Irish heart. Before he quitted this part of the subject, he could not forbear reminding the House of the new English paper which had been lately established in Paris, with the cognizance and sanction of the government (for no paper could otherwise be circulated there), and in which, among a mass of very dull sedition, it had been insinuated, that the Irish nation was absolved from its allegiance to the king. This, it must be confessed, was pretty ardent language for this anti-jacobin, pretty stout doctrine for this confirmed friend and potent protector of civil government, who had the press of France at his devotion, to suffer to be circulated in his own dominions, and to be transmitted to the country with which he had recently concluded a treaty of peace and amity. Another topic of comfort was the increase of the trade and resources of the country. He felt it his duty here to correct a misconception of his noble friend (lord Castlereagh), who appeared to have understood some of the gentlemen near him to have stated in the last parliament, that the resources of the country depended upon war. His noble friend had certainly misunderstood those gentlemen: they, to the best of his recollection, had said, that it was probable that, for the first two or three years of peace, the amount of our trade would remain much the same as it had been in the course of the war; but that when the peace should assume a settled and permanent appearance, it must be expected that the other maritime powers of Europe

Digitized by Google

would resume their share of the commerce, which, during the war, had been entirely engrossed by Great Britain. The chancellor of the exchequer had represented the exports of the last year to exceed those of any of the years of war. He was far from meaning to controvert the fact. He had no doubt that the exports of our manufactures to France were very considerable, notwithstanding the severe restrictions of the French government; but it was to be observed, that our commodities being excluded by the French decrees from the whole line of the French coast, our trade was carried on totally on the principle of a contraband traffic, and much of it in neutral bottoms: consequently, the prosperity of our navigation was made a subordinate consideration to the manufacturing interest. The price of shipping had, he understood, already experienced a considerable fall; and thus, while continental connexions, one great means of control over the ambition of France, were regarded as impracticable, and by one gentleman ineligible, even if they could be obtained, we were embarking in a system of commerce eminently prejudicial to that maritime superiority which was our only remaining shield against French aggrandizement. We also ought not to veil from ourselves the immense commercial means of France, if she should apply herself to objects of that nature. It seemed impossible to look without some apprehension at the vast territorial extent of that country, its immense population, and its inexhaustible riches of production, together with the addition of the industry and manufactures of the Austrian Netherlands, and the collieries, iron-works, naval stores, and other multiplied resources of the country lying between the Meuse and the Rhine. Much reliance had been, perhaps justly, placed on the superiority of British capital, credit, and confidence; but he did not think we sufficiently appreciated the force of the capital of French power and of French energy. He was at a loss to discern the principle on which those persons reasoned, who thought that the activity and enterprise which had rendered France so formidable in war, would not have the same overwhelming influence when directed to the concerns of commerce. Of the magnificence of the public works in France, we had a recent example in the military road through the Valais, which he understood was carried on upon the grandest scale. If with the same spirit, and on the same scale, she should turn her attention to the formation of canals, which, he believed, she did not wholly neglect, she must, in consequence of her possession of all the principal rivers of Europe, secure to herself the entire inland navigation of the continent. Of the coast of Europe she was already mistress; and we had too good reason to know that she now had large and valuable colonial territories. He was anxious, however, not to be understood as depreciating the resources and riches of this country; he firmly believed it was almost bursting with opulence. But some gentlemen argued as if the efficacy of wealth did not consist in its application. They really spoke as if it contained some principle of vitality, as if it had some inherent principle of activity, as if it had ears and eyes, and hands and feet. They say, "We have a surplus of near four millions of money." I say, "The French have four hundred thousand bayonets." I tell them, "An armed robber is at the door."—"Oh! but," say they, "we are very rich." In common sense the answer is, "So much the better for the robber." The report which ministers had to make to parliament, of their administration, was this: "It is very true that Germany has been so divided as to secure the preponderance of France in the empire; that a great portion of Italy belongs to France, and the whole of it is under her influence; that Piedmont is annexed to France; that Switzerland has been overwhelmed by France; that the Austrian Netherlands and a considerable part of Germany are united to France; and that Holland, Spain, Portugal, and the coast of Barbary, are in vassalage to her; that we have recognised a principle of armament for France, by permitting her to send fleets and armies to St. Domingo for the subjugation of the negroes; and that, if those fleets and armies fail to subdue the negroes, they are ready to be applied to the invasion of our own colonies; that we have restored to France, Martinico, improved both in point of cultivation and strength, and also Tobago and St. Lucie; and that we have ceded Elba and Minorca. The Cape, we trust, is not yet transferred; but our possession of it depends on a race of ships. Malta we still hold, because fortunately the machinery of the arrangement for our dereliction of it is so curiously complicated, that even its inventors

Digitized by Google

cannot work it. France has imported maritime stores with great activity, and to an immense amount. We have transferred to France near thirty thousand seamen, and we have reduced our own establishment in a greater proportion. All these things are very true; but we have a surplus of near four millions of money." What an account was this for a government to render at such a crisis! Former parliaments would have demanded, and he hoped the present parliament would ask, "Where is our army for the protection of the few possessions you have left us? Is Ireland in a state of safety? Where is our Channel fleet, the bulwark of our coasts? Your savings have been made out of the very vital security of the country." No man, he said, could exult more in the flourishing state of the revenue and resources of the nation than he did. But he could not help reminding gentlemen, that our wealth may be our glory or our shame. If wealth was in its due place, and was made subservient to the honour, dignity, independence, and security of the country, he trusted that under the blessing of Providence, it might become the foundation of a towering and durable greatness; but if we betrayed more fear for the loss of it than zeal in defending it, if we did not direct it to its proper objects, it would be no longer the magazine of our strength, or the storehouse of our power, but an additional bait to the rapacity of our foe. In respect to the necessity or expediency of war at the present moment, he should not presume to deliver an opinion. It was a point on which those were responsible who had the necessary information. But he was prepared to say, that we ought to arm without delay, and that we ought to retain, even at the hazard of war, those points of cession which remained in our hands, as some balance (though he confessed a very inadequate one) to the accession of power which France had acquired since the signature of the treaty of peace. An hon. gentleman had asked, "Why should you risk hostilities? What would be the chances of war?" He should reply by asking, What had been the chances of peace? We beheld France possessed of large territories in the western hemisphere, something in Asia, much in Africa, almost the whole of Europe, and a long line of coast opposite our shores, augmenting instead of reducing her establishments both by sea and land; showing no disposition to forego her system of aggrandizement, but, on the contrary, pursuing it with unabating zeal and increased rapidity; prohibiting our trade, and manifesting a rooted desire for the destruction of that country which presented the only remaining obstacle to her universal dominion. If in this predicament we submitted, she would continue her encroachments, and the point of our resistance must at last arrive, when we should have diminished means of contending with her. It was evident we must, under the present aspect of affairs, arm to the amount of a war establishment; and under such circumstances, what would become of the economy of peace, which was the benefit most expected and most desired from it? He begged nevertheless to be understood as far from advising that the country should be rashly plunged into war. Perhaps that event might be still averted by a firm, dignified, and vigorous remonstrance; but whether such a representation might have its due weight and effect, when urged by those who had hitherto spoken only in the tone of acquiescence and submission, was, indeed, a matter of very grave and serious reflection. He should trouble the House no farther than to observe, that if unfortunately we should be compelled to a renewal of hostilities, it would not be a contest for our honour, though that would be a legitimate cause for war; nor for the rights and the independence of other nations, though that also would be a legitimate cause of war; but it would be a struggle for the very existence of the empire; and relying on the justice of our cause, and on that most valuable of all our resources (which, he trusted, we should ever most carefully cherish and foster), the generous spirit and magnanimous fortitude of the people, he hoped we might look with confidence to a favourable result.

Sir *Francis Burdett* said, that in his mind, the speeches he had heard on both sides excited the greatest degree of surprise; for they presented to him the most extraordinary portrait of a debate he had ever beheld. He agreed, however, in many points urged by those in whose opinions he had often concurred; and also in many that were advanced by gentlemen with whom he never before had the good fortune to concur in opinion. As to the speech of the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, if it did not provoke and incite to war, it appeared to him the most

Digitized by Google

ıge and disinterested exertion he had witnessed. Indeed, that hon. gen- ıan had depicted, with great truth, the ıncholy state of the country, arising of the gigantic aggrandizement and ımulating resources of France. With- ɔretending to any great degree of po- ıl sagacity, it was easy to foresee that aggrandizement, seconded by all its ɔomitant circumstances, must be a ɔe of alarm and of danger to Great ıin. What was now the extent of ce, or of French influence? Was bounded but by the Alps, the Pyre- the Rhine, and the Ocean? Was ıot said to possess forty or fifty mil- of inhabitants, not like those of our ɔrn dominions, but a race of men ac- hardy, brave, industrious, warlike ɔell-disciplined; possessing the most ɔ territories, fostered by a most ge- climate; commanding an immense ıf coast, with numberless most op- ne harbours; countenanced almost Europe as her allies, and having ɔed by war innumerable resources ıe prosecution of new wars, and ing all these advantages with the ng splendour of recent victories, he fascinating lustre of military re- ? So formidable a situation could ɔ contemplated by an Englishman ıt dismay, and no man could be deeply alarmed at it than he was. t the same time that he confessed ırming nature of our situation, was extraordinary that those who have ulated against us this mountain of 's and difficulties, should be the ɔrward to exaggerate them: that ıould be the loudest in stating the ɔf their own conduct and counsels, e most studious in detailing the pe- th which their imprudence, their cy, or their infatuation, have en- ısed the country? Nothing sure- ld be more extraordinary, except vice they now offer us. They ad- —to do what? Why, to pursue ıe mad career they themselves had ɔre, and to choose the same per- our guide who has plunged us in perils and perplexities which they pathetically, but so preposterously . A right hon. gentleman (Mr. ım) exemplified his terror and sur- the aggrandizement of France, by ng a man to arise out of his grave r eight years after his death, and king a survey of Europe, to ask what is become of Brabant, what is become of Piedmont, what of Genoa, what of all Italy? Who could so well answer the queries of such a man as the right hon. gentleman, or how could he better resolve such questions than by a simple detail of his own administration? But, after all, what is the blame now imputed to ministers? That they made peace without foreseeing what advantages France would derive from peace; and that they do not now hold a bold and blustering language, while it is confessed that, if they again tried the chances of war, there would scarcely be any hope of their doing any thing effectual. Would to God no greater faults could be imputed to the present or to the late administration! Almost never did it fall to his lot to approve the measures of administration; but if the peace which the present administration had concluded was liable to objections, those objections were not imputable to them. If any faults or blame attended the negotiation of the peace, they were not fairly ascribable to ministers: for they arose out of the nature of the war itself, and the principles upon which it was conducted. Did not the ministers of this country endeavour by every means to surround France with a confederacy of despots, by which they left her no choice but resistance and victory, or tame submission to the dictates of foreign powers? Hence the enthusiasm with which France was fired; hence those energies which she has so triumphantly displayed, and from the exertion of which flow all the consequences which are now deemed so humiliating to our pride, and so fatal to our security. But an hon. gentleman says, that he voted for peace as an experiment. Surely the changes and chances that may arise from war or peace, are not of a nature to be trifled with, and the hazarding of such experiments cannot be said to argue any great wisdom or prudence. He was led much more to adopt the sentiments of another hon. gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce); sentiments, however, which he could not but hear with surprise, from a person who had been a zealous and uniform supporter of the war, but which certainly, as far as his judgment went, laid down the true policy which this country ought to pursue; for nothing now was so absurd as any attempt to renew or preserve what was called a balance of power in Europe. The experience of the last ten years abundantly evinced that absurdity; and though that

Digitized by Google

system was formerly countenanced by some of our enlightened statesmen, yet a change of circumstances rendered it now impossible, at least as far as England could attempt to influence it. The hon. baronet next proceeded to his more particular objections to the proposed address. It stated that we should look with watchfulness to the state of Europe, and seemed to intimate that we should catch at an opportunity of renewing hostilities. Such an expression he could not but consider as imprudent, for it argued an inclination, without a consciousness of ability to give it effect; in such language there was little of wisdom or of dignity. The other passage he had to object to, was that which alluded to the advantages of the union with Ireland. Ireland had reaped no advantages from what had been commonly called the union, but which in truth should be called her subjugation; if any advantage was derived from it, it was experienced only by ministers, who drew from it an additional phalanx to strengthen their ranks in that House. He was disposed most cordially again to agree with an hon. gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce), with whom he scarcely ever agreed before, that ministers should exert every means to restore the just rights of the people, to consult their ease, to get acquainted with their opinions and wishes, and to employ every endeavour to conciliate their confidence and affections. But could this be done without a due reform in the representation of the people? Impossible! that alone can unite the hearts and draw forth the unanimous exertions of the people; that alone can snatch us from the dangers which press upon the country. The term Jacobin was again revived: when gentlemen make use of it, they should endeavour in some way to define its meaning; of late it was applied to all those who ventured to reprove the tyrannical and oppressive measures of government, or who attempted to discountenance the principles of Toryism which were endeavoured to be set up in the country. If it was really the wish of ministers to rally and unite all honest men in defence of the constitution and the country, let them hold out some principle for which they will fight; a principle that can win their hearts, and gain their understandings. For his part, he believed the principle of reform would have great weight with the people to that effect; and under the present circumstances, he did not see that any other principle would enable the country to cope with France, and rise above the difficulties with which it was now threatened. One word about another topic which had emphatically been insisted upon, he meant the abilities and services of the leader of the late administration. In his absence he would say but little on that point. His character required but few words to describe it, they were these:—*Satis eloquentiæ, sapientiæ parvum:* but much of what that right hon. gentleman had little, was now required to rescue us from the many perils with which we were assailed. As to the question of peace or war, he congratulated the country on our impossibility to attempt the former. Such an attempt in the present state of Europe, would betray not a spirit of hostility, but of insanity; but as this topic had been already so much discussed, he should not dwell upon it, but content himself with concurring in the address as far as it went, to encourage and maintain the continuance of peace.

Mr. *Johnstone* approved of the conduct of ministers, in endeavouring to maintain peace, and was sorry to see them deserted by their former friends, while they were attacked by gentlemen of such formidable abilities. Indeed, it was but too evident that endeavours were making to remove them from office. The conduct of a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Windham), and that of his friend, gave him much surprise; for after the Netherlands, and in a great measure, Holland have been abandoned to the French, was it prudent to instigate a war for interests in which we were so remotely concerned, and when our interference could not be attended with success? Equally must he disapprove of all attempts to renew continental alliances with Austria, at least till other powers were inclined to co-operate with us. These powers should court our alliance, not we theirs. He trusted ministers would persevere in the system they had hitherto pursued, that they would remain calm and moderate, and not expose the country to the chances of war, unless our naval power was attacked, or our colonial possessions invaded.

Earl *Temple* animadverted on that part of the speech of sir F. Burdett where the present power of France was ascribed to the attempts of a confederacy of despots to dictate to her. While these despots acted with this country, they were the

Digitized by Google

objects of that hon baronet's spleen and invective; but now that the despotism of Europe was united in one hand, and directed against this country, it was no longer assailed with those invectives. But he principally rose to notice a phrase which was used on both sides of the House; namely, that he and his friends wished for war at any rate in preference to peace. To such an assertion he must give a flat denial. They had no wish for war, they saw all its dangers, and were ready to confess the almost impossibility of success under the present circumstances. Their object was, to open the eyes of the people, and enable them to see the real dangers of the country; how its dignity suffered; how its interests were impaired; and how impossible it was to look for safety in war, or security in peace, under an administration like the present. A storm was ready to burst upon us; but were they the men that could enable us to escape it? Would not they rather act as dull conductors (and so much the worse from being dull) to draw down and scatter wider the lightnings that were to consume us? They had no right to call upon the country to go to war. When they made peace, they pledged themselves to resist the future aggrandizement of France. That promise they had not kept; on the contrary, every step of aggrandizement on the part of France had been followed on their parts with a proportionate disarming. The address was filled with a maukish mixture of pretended firmness and conciliation; but, as far as it thanked the bounty of Heaven for a plentiful harvest, it should have his concurrence.

General *Maitland* said, that our effective force was greater than it had been in any former peace, or even in several years of the late war. With regard to our fleet, no blame could attach to ministers for its diminution, as there were 48,000 sailors, from which any deficiency might be supplied, should circumstances render an augmentation necessary. Much had been said of the insufficiency of confidence, credit, and capital, on which we relied for the stability of our commerce, and how little they would avail us whenever Buonaparté should think fit to throw his sword into the scale. Now, he thought his very apprehension was the best security for our commerce. Commerce never flourished under a tyrannical government; it could only find its way into a free government, without ambition or passion for conquest. A right hon. gentleman had said that, weighing all the circumstances of our situation, the tendency of his mind was for war. If war could remedy the evils of which he complained, this advice might be good; but it could not. War would not change the situation of France in Europe. We might, indeed, take her colonies, sweep the ocean of her ships, and by ruining her trade destroy her finances. But what would be the result of all this? Why she would do as she had done before. She would make some neighbouring state her bank, and draw upon it for the reimbursement of her losses. If the states of Europe were full of health and vigour, he was not prepared to say, that we ought not to make an effort to recover from France what was lost in Europe. But that was not the case; and therefore any such attempt must prove abortive.

The *Secretary at War* said:—I am surprised that any gentleman should say that we have no army, and that we have laid aside our navy. So far is this assertion from being founded in fact, that we have a greater efficient force than we ever possessed in peace, or even in several years of the late war. The diminution made in it is only of the corps that were enlisted for a specific time, of the militia, and of a number of the fencible corps that were raised upon the same terms with respect to the duration of their service. Thus our physical force is not only greater than at the periods I have already mentioned, but it is in a state of organization and discipline for the purpose of carrying it, whenever necessary, to such a state of augmentation, as would make it not a very pleasant thing for any foreign force to meddle with it. An hon. gentleman has asked, where is our channel fleet? We have not, to be sure, 30 or 40 sail of the line lying at Spithead, but we have a fleet greater than ever it was in a peace, or even during part of the late war—not stationed in one port, I allow, but scattered over the world, in the West Indies, in the Mediterranean, and several other places; in none of which is it insufficient to meet any force that France could muster against it. I was glad to hear the speech of the noble lord, because until I heard it, I was at a loss to come to any practical conclusion upon the argument of the gentlemen who have taken the same course. That the situa-

Digitized by Google

tion of France is formidable, that she has attained a power and influence greater than may be compatible with our interests, and that, as such, she should be viewed with considerable anxiety by this country, are points which no man attempts to disguise; but the tendency of their speeches beyond that I did not know. The speech, however, of the noble lord, discloses their ulterior views. From the speech of a right hon. member yesterday, I thought their object was to renew the war; but to-day, I find it is the dismissal of ministers. It is manly in the noble lord to avow it, thinking, as he does, that himself and his friends could fill their places much better. This, then, being the noble lord's opinion, why not bring the question before the House, instead of drawing a gloomy picture of our affairs, and exaggerating the dangers of the country with a view to make it discontented with the present administration? That administration the noble lord described as a maukish milk and water composition. Should the noble lord and his friends succeed in their plans to come into office, I do not know whether it will be a maukish administration; but I must say, it will not be one without insolence. We did not come into office by cabal or intrigue. Whatever may be our deficiences, it would at least be said of us, that we gave peace to the country, and that it suffered no calamity in our hands.

Mr. *Fox* said:—Sir, it has been to me a source of the liveliest satisfaction to hear the warm eloquence of the youthful lord. I have heard also with pleasure, the avowal of the object of his arguments, and the conclusion that he has drawn from them; for I see, that all those tropes and figures, all the metaphors and imagery which have adorned the speeches of the noble lord and his friends, in abundance sufficient to make an epic poem, have had for their only object a change of ministers, by substituting a part of the last administration in the room of the present. Thanks to this candid avowal, I can now read of intrigues and changes to effect a return of certain persons to office, not, I admit, with absolute indifference, but with something like it, because I find, that in the event of their being restored we shall get rid of all their warlike language, the country will be flourishing and happy, and all the horrors with which we are threatened from France will have passed away: we shall then have an administration, containing a great name, that will be in itself a tower of strength to the country, and sufficient for every purpose of its defence, security, and happiness, without the assistance of fleets and armaments. But this is not the only cause of joy that I find in the speech of the noble lord. It supplies another fruitful source of pleasing consolation. When people seek to change an administration by speeches and declarations calculated to throw an odium upon it, they always choose some popular topics. The declaration therefore of the noble lord, that his object is not to renew the war, plainly shows to me, that the disposition of the country is pacific, and that a war would be unpopular. I entertained that sentiment before, and have now the satisfaction of finding it confirmed by the noble lord's speech. I shall not be ungrateful for the pleasure, and will repay it as well as I can. After the political course that I have taken, and the efforts that I have made in this House, it would be strange indeed if I should entertain a wish to represent an attempt to change an administration as unconstitutional and unwarrantable. The object of the noble lord, therefore, as a principle, I cannot disapprove; but in the mode to attain it, I wish he had taken example from the opposition of which I formed a part, and, by pursuing their line of conduct on similar occasions, endeavoured to effect his purpose in a fair and regular way. The right hon. the secretary at war says, "if we be an incompetent administration, without ability to fill our station, bring that question to issue directly, and try it fairly." Now though this may be an open and candid proposition, I do not think it is a fair answer, because it is not the course that practice and experience would warrant him to adopt. There are other ways by which the object might be more regularly attained. If the noble lord has reason to think that there is any thing improper in the conduct of administration, if he is dissatisfied with any of their measures on points of serious magnitude, let him take the sense of the House upon it, and it may be afterwards seen whether that particular conduct, or measure, so canvassed and discussed, be sufficient ground for their removal. If ministers were to draw a gloomy picture of the state of the country, not warranted by actual circumstances, and having thus excited an unfounded alarm, should advise

Digitized by Google

his majesty to arm to an extent beyond what was necessary, that I conceive would be a fair question to submit to the House with a view to their removal. But it would be going too far, to say at once, without a fair and constitutional inquiry into their conduct, "we dislike the present administration; it is a maukish, milk, and water composition: we would like another better, and therefore we must get rid of it." The right hon. gentleman also says, that he or his friends did not seek their offices, or owe them to intrigue. Now, with regard to how they came into office, though I have generally approved their conduct since, I am not prepared to give my approbation to that question. The late ministers assigned a certain principle as the cause of their removal. If, then, the present came in upon a contrary principle, and to prevent the extension of rights to a great portion of his majesty's subjects to which they were clearly entitled, I must condemn the way in which they came into office. The noble lord's speech also contained a censure upon an hon. baronet (sir F. Burdett); it charges him with having been tremblingly alive to the interests of France when threatened by a foreign foe, while he has no feeling for his own country in a similar situation. To this I answer that the cases are not parallel, that there is no similitude between them. When Prussia, Austria, and England, joined to overturn the new government of France; when the mode of carrying their design into execution was to invade that country, to attack her towns and cities, is that I ask, a parallel with our situation? Is the recent interference in Switzerland like the attempt of Austria to restore the crown of France to the House of Bourbon? There is no resemblance between the two cases. But what is the spirit and feeling shown by the noble lord who is ready to censure the want of them in another? He puts England in precisely the same situation in which France was when the duke of Brunswick issued his proclamation, threatening not to leave one stone upon another, and yet, he says, he does not advise her to go to war for her defence. In this view the spirit of the noble lord is very far below the spirit evinced by the hon. baronet. But what is the state of things that calls forth all these apprehensions? We are told that if a man were to rise from the dead, and to ask what was become of the twenty independent states which he had left behind him, he would be told they were all sunk and destroyed under the power of France, except England. But might he not be tempted to ask, who were the ministers of England when all these changes happened, and why they did not prevent them? He might probably presume, that they wanted vigour, that they let the giant quietly attain his full growth; but what would he say, when he should be undeceived, and told that ministers had been constantly making vigorous attacks upon him from his cradle, but that they were ill-directed, and incapable of effecting their purpose? It was rightly observed, that France cannot remain in the formidable state in which she now is. I do not like to go into a history of these things, and shall only notice a few in illustration of this observation. How did you proceed against France? you threatened her very vitals. That proceeding roused a spirit of resistance; and the minds of her people being heated by the alternative which you offered of a government at your hands or destruction, an enthusiasm was excited, and the country was roused to exertions beyond her natural strength. That spirit, no doubt, did not last; but then, the impulse once given, she was enabled to continue those extraordinary exertions, and persevere in the career which it had opened. Look to the Netherlands in the time of king William, and you will there also discover a spirit of energy far beyond the natural strength of the country. And to what is it to be attributed? why to the oppression of Philip 2nd, and to the attack of Louis the 14th. Until these powers interfered, the Netherlands were nothing; but after this provocation their energy was excited, and they rose to a flourishing state. I grant that Holland, from its size, was not formidable, but rather a subject of admiration; but then the cause that effected this change was the same that operated in France, where it would have produced no greater consequence, had the country been of the same extent. I am far from saying, that France, in process of time, must fall to the state of Holland. She will fall to the state of the first country upon the continent; but she will not retain that quantity of spirit or peculiar force formidable to the safety of other nations which she at present possesses. I am no advocate for France, but I am a friend to common sense; and that informs us, that there may be many things which, however we

Digitized by Google

may regret, we cannot cure. I give the hon. gentleman credit for his quotation from Machiavel. The principle has my full approbation; and relying upon it, I do believe there are many things in France that we now dislike, which time will alleviate. We are told, that France has taken several steps, since the definitive treaty, which are aggressions; but why I know not. The principle of the indemnities in Germany is as old as the treaty of Luneville, and older. Secularisations were the means for carrying it into effect, and you knew it; for if you read the public prints, you must have learned that the principle existed at that time, and that such was the mode by which it was carried into effect, and, knowing it, you signed the treaty of Amiens. Now this is called an aggression; but if it be a violence it is also a violence of the court of Petersburgh, which is alike with France a party in the business; and if so, why does not the House ring with the perfidy and violence of the court of Petersburgh? But we are told the elector was particularly concerned in the arrangement of this business. Now it has been the policy laid down by all wise statesmen, that the interests of England and Hanover are perfectly separate, just as separate as the interests of England and Hesse Cassel, or any other state in Germany. I therefore see in the case the elector of Hanover only, and not the sovereign whom we all revere. Is the business of the indemnities then, I ask, in that view an aggression against Great Britain? I now come to Switzerland. Dreadful as the two partitions of Poland were, they were not a greater source of regret than this. I love the people of Switzerland; I have known and seen their happiness. It has been, at different times, the refuge of liberty; and I lament the fate that has befallen it, proportionably with the pride and happiness which they placed in the enjoyment of independence. But the case of Switzerland is admitted to be no ground of war, and consequently can be no aggression against Great Britain; for I presume it will not be contended that an aggression is not a ground of war. But was not Switzerland in the hands of the French at the very time of the treaties of Luneville and Amiens? It certainly was, and, a considerable dissention having since arisen in that country, France has interfered. Now, are we the guarantees of the whole world? Whatever name you choose to give to the conduct of France in Switzerland, you cannot call it an aggression against Great Britain. The true cause of all this complaint is this: Switzerland is a great accession to France; but when you made the peace, did not you see that Switzerland, whether divided into small cantons, or large cantons, whatever the form of its government, or the state of its parties, was in the power of France? Did you not hear it stated, and did you not know that the peace left her in the power of France? But it is said, that France has extended her territory since the peace. Now, before the treaty of Amiens, she had annexed the Netherlands, she had gained Savoy, and made various other acquisitions; but all these are nothing to what she has gained since the peace; yet Switzerland she had before, and all she has gained in Piedmont is to have changed it from the 29th military department, as she formerly called it, into the department of the Po, or some such name. Now, how is this an aggression against England? We did not stipulate for the king of Sardinia. You gave up the king of Sardinia in the definitive treaty; and if so, you have no right to bring him into account now against France as matter subsequent to the peace. In the guilt, however, of this desertion, we were not without an accomplice. Russia was applied to in favour of the king of Sardinia, and shown, I understand, a disposition to interfere; but what said Austria? "There are too many of us here already. There is no room for him here. If he is to get any thing here, you will be wanting, perhaps, a slice from me of Venice to compensate the petty prince of whose territory he gets a share."—Sir, another consideration arises in my mind—what may be expected to be the state of our finances, should war be renewed? This, I know is dross to some men. Oh what is money? What is wealth? You will tell me we have three or four millions of surplus, and what have the French? And then one hon. gentleman breaks out in the style and strain of heroic enterprise and chivalry. Why, Sir, upon the subject of great attention to wealth, I may perhaps be as careless as any man. One of the most ancient and beautiful of our poets, says—

> Reward of worldly muck doth foully blend,
> And low abase the high heroic spirit,
> That joys for crowns.

Digitized by Google

Sir, these may be riches, but they are not the riches fit for the people of England. Equal military force with France we cannot have. We must therefore supply the impossibility of having an equal army, by the superiority of our navy, and by that steady and systematic economy which may enable us to remedy that military deficiency. To talk otherwise is talking the language of children. But, says an hon. gentleman, the thief is at the door, and you are rich, and so much the better for him. My answer is, that it is better to prevent his entrance, than to have a gun or weapon oneself to resist him when he has entered; and that it is more prudent to procure the means of purchasing those who may defend us from such an attack. Sir, I know there are short answers to all these arguments; for one cannot but see how frequently extremes meet. It was said, I remember, of the Jacobins, that they despised all experience, laughed at the evidence of history, and desired us to throw our books into the sea. The same assertions are now used: the same arguments are enforced when we attempt to quote history; and the right hon. gentleman is fully prepared with his poetical appendages in support of his opinion. Sir, reasoning upon past experience, may perhaps, in this new situation of the world, be bad; but whether it be not at least as good as reasoning upon warm, unintelligible, impassioned feelings, I leave those who hear me to decide. Sir, I confess, for one, that I like the support of deficient history, and deficient I am willing to confess it is, better than the feelings of men who set out with confessing themselves to be frightened out of all bounds. Upon the greatness and power of France, I will make some remarks by-and-by; but I must first advert to two or three arguments which have been used with respect to the cessions that we were to make. Some gentlemen say, "Don't surrender Malta; don't surrender the Cape." I say, Sir, don't surrender Malta while a doubt remains upon the fulfilment of the articles of the treaty that relate to that island. Don't surrender the Cape, if the other parts of the treaty be not executed. But if they be fulfilled—if the letter of the bond be executed, why then, I say, cede Malta, give up the Cape, upon the same principle of chivalry to which the right hon. gentleman clings, because you promised to do so, and because the honour of nations is their best and proudest possession. Much has been said of a French paper, in which it is alleged that the treaty of Amiens has consolidated the empire of France. Why, Sir, that treaty did recognize that empire, and by making peace, did confess that the situation of that empire, was no further ground of quarrel. I repeat, therefore, that the greatness of France was no longer any ground of quarrel. Why then, Sir, the question would be only a question of expediency. Undoubtedly, if that greatness should be abused; if it should be exercised in such a way as to affect the honour of Great Britain, then, indeed, we should be called upon for a different mode of conduct. Sir, there is one species of warfare, of the success of which, without in the smallest degree doubting the skill and valour of either our soldiers or seamen, I confess I am not very sanguine. There is another kind of warfare, a more important one, perhaps, upon which I am less sanguine. If gentlemen mean to recommend a system of warfare by continental connexions, by making an impression upon the continent of France by those connexions, I, for one, cannot be sanguine with respect to the success of such a war. I do not mean to go into all the arguments used by the hon. gentleman who opened the debate; but I do believe the policy to be in general a right one. I do think, without entertaining too much national jealousy, that a man might read the history of continental wars down to the peace of 1763, and say, that, except from the conferences of Gertruydenberg to the peace of Utrecht, not one war had been unjustifiably undertaken by this country. But the case is altered now. That which was a doubtful feeling, is now become a question of necessity. Will any man, after the experience of the last war, contend, that a connexion with German princes against France is likely to be more successful in future, than it was during that war? Sorry am I to hear any member assert, that we are looking forward to those connexions. Sorry should I be to hear it insinuated, that his majesty's ministers were looking forward to those connections with a view of renewing the war. I remember what was said by an hon. member, that there was every reason to suppose, in the two treaties of peace with France that preceded the present, aye, and in the peace of 1749, France was meditating the means of resuming hostilities. But let

Digitized by Google

not such an accusation be brought against the ministers of Great Britain. Sir, we are all agreed upon one point, that this is not the moment to avail ourselves of the assistance of Austria. Then let us not be too eager in looking forward to that connexion as an available resource in future—for, see what effect you will produce. If you suffer it to be supposed that you do look to Austria as the power upon which you rely to check and curb the ambition of France, what additional motives do you not hold out to France to cripple and diminish the power of Austria? Sir, this is not a wise system of conduct—it is not a prudent one—it is not a generous one. But, in addition to the other aggressions of France which gentlemen have enumerated, some gentlemen have mentioned the furious hatred of the First Consul to us. There is, indeed, a species of hatred which we may always expect even in time of peace, a hatred proceeding from rivalship; but let it not be supposed that all the irritation is on one side. I wish not to state circumstances too humbly, nor at the same time too proudly for us. But if France be too powerful upon the continent of Europe, can we disguise that our naval superiority is an object of great jealousy to many of the powers upon the continent? If France inspired alarms by her armies, do we inspire none by our fleets? If there was an assembly like this in France, might they not speak of our naval superiority in something like the same terms we use in speaking of their military superiority? You say such irritation subsists, and then, by a singular mode of argument, consider the French government as answerable for every libel that is published—that would be dealing out a kind of political justice for the destruction of the press. But let it be recollected, that an *imprimatur* existed in England a century ago; yet I never heard that Louis the 14th or the Dutch considered every publication in this country as the act of the government. But be it so: the French newspapers are irritating I grant. Who began the contest, I know not. They have gone the length, I am told, of publishing, in an English paper, printed at Paris, that the Irish are absolved from their allegiance. One number of that paper I certainly saw; but I found my friends spoken ill of in it, and myself abused; and as I have no satisfaction in hearing them ill spoken of, and as little in hearing myself abused, I never read more than that one number. But let me ask gentlemen, have the English newspapers said nothing? Have they been conciliatory? To the shame of the country, I have heard that a paragraph has been inserted in one of them, declaring that Englishmen ought to fight Buonaparté with fleets and armies, but that Frenchmen ought to fight him with something more than the pen. Is not this, I ask, an instigation to the assassination of that person? [Several members cried, No! No! No!]—No, Sir! What then is it an instigation to do? I grant, that, in a prosecution for such a paragraph, ingenious counsel might contend that it was not. They might assert it to be a hint to insurrection, which, in certain cases, might be justifiable. But no man, I am sure, whatever his political sentiments may be, will view an instigation to assassination without horror and disgust. Yet let us allow then that the irritation is not all on one side; that the French newspapers are not the only ones that are irritating. Oh, but next comes this—Napper Tandy has been received in France. I certainly do not know the conditions of his pardon; but there are other Irish at Paris—where are they to be received? You say that they shall not be received but by a government at peace with Great Britain. You did not mean, I suppose, that they should not be landed on any inhabited part of the globe.—And then come the arguments founded upon the propriety of keeping up the public spirit. If it be right to do so, I should think that that spirit would be more likely to be raised by the introduction of some practical improvement in the constitution. If that, however, be not thought fit, the best other way would be, an assurance that you will not call upon the people to give their support to wars, but from urgent, proved, and absolute necessity. Sir, is the publication of libels, is the making of irritating speeches against the government of France, the best way of raising that spirit? Is it a fair, is it a manly way? Who began that paper contest I know not. It has been much in use on both sides. But, notwithstanding the splendid state drawn by the partizans of their respective countries, many philosophical persons on each side, look on this war of words with contempt. Yet, if we must fight, I had rather it should be in this than in any other way. If there be a certain quantity of bile which it is neces-

Digitized by Google

sary to exhaust; if there be a certain quantity of invective which it is wished to consume, why then, let the fight be continued—let paper contend with paper; let the Moniteur fight it out with The Morning Post; but let not the two countries be involved in the quarrel.—There is another point which is worthy of our consideration. You have just sent an ambassador to France, a nobleman of great abilities, of frank and amiable manners, a man every way qualified for the important situation;—you have sent him, and what is he to be? The representative of the sovereign—the representative of the British nation. Is it, then, dignified or decent, when he is making his bows, and paying the accustomed tributes of respect and friendship, that we shall be calling names, and applying opprobrious epithets to that person whom we are treating in another place, through the medium of our ambassador, with such courtesy and respect? Sir, I am not disposed to deny that the crisis is momentous, that it is critical. I do not look at the power of France without feelings of dread; but I cannot see any reason, either in France or here, that should make me think irritating language the most likely means of curbing that power, or of reducing it. Always let it be recollected too, that we shall not be stronger in war for using such language before it.—Sir, with respect to our peace establishment, I hope and trust it will not be greater than is absolutely necessary. And here I must take notice of what I consider to be a most unjust charge against ministers. It has been asked, could we have thought at the time peace was made, that ministers would have so disarmed? Why, Sir, I suggested an observation at that time, that the army was too high; and I was answered, that I was not to take that establishment then as the fair peace establishment. Here, then, I contend, that the gentlemen who now bring forward this charge had fair notice of the reduction; yet they never objected to it at the time. Sir, if the country, contrary to my opinion certainly, thinks that her safety consists in a large peace establishment, she has a right to adopt such a measure, without France having any right to be alarmed. But I, for one, think, that a large establishment, as bringing with it great additional expense, will tend to enfeeble the country; and I own, too, I have other objections founded upon constitutional principles. These I shall not argue now; but I must say, that a very extended army has always been one of the most to be dreaded means of influence on the part of the crown, ever since the revolution of 1688. In exciting our alarms at the present crisis, one gentleman says, "but think of your commerce." I do not know whether he did not endeavour to increase our apprehensions, by informing us that France was cutting a canal. Another gentleman supposes that France will be too patrician, too noble, to think of commerce; that she will take the military part, and issue orders to Genoa and Amsterdam to rival the trade of Great Britain. Nothing more easy, perhaps that gentleman thinks. But no, says a third: she will do it herself—she is making ports, cutting canals, increasing in activity and vigour. And what is the remedy they recommend for such a state? War. Take care, they say, that you do not engage with France in commerce—take care of your manufactures—look at the French ones—Why, Sir, certainly, the French manufactures are beautiful. But I would still venture to assert, that our Staffordshire ware would stand a comparison with the Seve manufactory, not perhaps in look or in colour altogether, but in all other respects. But you say, Go to war. In that way the French are innocent; there is no reason to dread their bayonets and their requisitions; but for God's sake take care, they add, of this rivalry of commerce. But, Sir, if you go to war, and have no commerce, and no money, why then certainly you get rid of the thief from your door. A noble lord takes a different ground. He says, the whole object is a change of administration, and the acquisition of better ministers—an open confession certainly. Sir, what I recommend is, not to adhere to ancient policy strictly, but to adopt a system of vigilance. If ministers shall ever state that acts of aggression have been committed against the country, the country, I will venture to say, will be responsive to their call. But let us not be too much alive to the evil which we have ourselves occasioned. Let not our too nice fears involve us in difficulty and danger. Let us remember that we are weak for any attack upon the continent of France; let us recollect that we are strong to repel any attack that may be made upon us. That is the principle upon which we

Digitized by Google

should proceed, and it is on that ground that I agree to the address. I will only repeat, that what I have heard in this House, and out of it, has concurred with my hope, that the sense of the country is strongly for peace, and that that sense will influence the conduct of his majesty's ministers. Before I sit down, however, I wish to say one word upon what has fallen from the hon. member for Liverpool. He acknowledges that our manufactures and revenue are flourishing, but considers our trade to have rather declined since the peace. Sir, if that were to be made use of as an argument, we should never be able to make peace. I rather believe that in the three last treaties of peace, in the peace of 1749, 1763, and 1783, there was a diminution of our commerce for some time afterwards. Yet let gentlemen see how far that consideration would carry us—it would be an eternal argument against peace. But this carrying-trade is alleged to be so material—France consumes our manufactures—I am glad she does. I could have wished, indeed, that commercial regulations had been adopted between the two countries. But after the regulations that we have made against the introduction of foreign manufactures into this country, we must not think that we have a right to complain because other nations resort to a similar mode of conduct. I regret, certainly, those restrictions which prevail to so great a degree in France, because I think that they place commerce upon an erroneous foundation. But we have no right to interfere. We have had before, treaties of the strictest friendship and alliance with other nations; and yet, during the very existence of those treaties, reciprocal commercial prohibitions have been strictly enforced.

Mr. *Windham* said, that his habits of debate had not been such as to give him a command of that ready, flexible, and discriminating recollection, for which Mr. Fox was eminently remarkable. But he thought it incumbent on him to attempt some reply to those things which were the most revolting to his judgment, and which had the most forcibly impressed themselves upon his remembrance. How was it possible for that hon. gentleman to deny to the penetration of his own mind, that the seeds of inordinate political aggrandizement were sown in the minds of the French nation, coeval with those of democratical revolution? Every succession of the revolutionary rulers, had openly professed the very principles which so conspicuously possessed the mind of the present first consul. The extension of dominion was made at one time the very pride of the revolution; at another, its necessary defence. But still it was, in one form or another, for one purpose or another, the most confidently professed. And was it for any man to come into that House, and offer an encomiastic apology for the first efforts of a principle, which had been thus carried, of deep design, and by no inevitable necessity, to its present threatening and overpowering height? It had been said, that Britain had gained nothing by the war—that France had acquired nothing by the peace. Was it, then, nothing gained, to preserve our constitution; to hold at bay both the revolutionary principles, and the political ambition of the French; to maintain that erect, independent, national spirit, which had so long constituted the very essence of the British character? Was it nothing to confine within the limits of Europe an ambition to bestride, as but a petty space, the very world? Buonaparte, with the soul of an Alexander, might regard this many-peopled earth as but a large prison; and was it nothing to confine that restless spirit within a space which might, to its hopes and darings, be but a narrow cell? The French had gained nothing by the peace! Was it nothing to have procured those restraints, which they could neither burst through nor surmount, to be voluntarily withdrawn? The preliminaries of peace—the treaty of Amiens—had they not, like the spell of a magician, like the movement of some talisman, laid open, in an instant, to France, the obstructed passages to the West Indies, to Africa, to Asia, to every region to which she might otherwise have long struggled in vain to make her way? The sudden restitution of St. Domingo to the dominion of France—was not that an effect of the peace? To what but the peace did she owe the advantages of that access which she gained by the acquisition of Louisiana to the back settlements of America? While the issue of the contest remained yet uncertain, France planned that confirmed power in Italy to which she had since attained. We may judge whether France has not gained by the peace, by reflecting, whether, if we were now to renew the war, we could renew it with all those pledges for success which we held in our hands at the cessation

Digitized by Google

of hostilities? The hon. gentleman has talked of the irritations of a paper war between the two countries, of its contemptible meanness, and of its being yet more foolish than irritating. But if we are to shut out from the people of this country all knowledge of the designs and conduct of the French rulers, it were difficult to understand how they should be prepared to meet any meditated hostilities with just indignation and resolution, till they were at our very gates, or rather kindling to a conflagration the very fires on our hearths. The hon. gentleman talks of the error of fine spun and distant speculations; then refers us to Machiavel for an account of the wonderful and happy things to be expected from the blessed agency of time and chance. But time and chance rarely do much in favour of men who can do nothing to support themselves. To time and chance none ever trusted less than the French. Who would bet upon the uncertainties of the dice, when he might venture his money upon the sure calculations to which it is possible to subject a game at chess? Look back to the most distant æra of French ambition to sway in the system of Europe. Buonapartè has but accomplished schemes that were conceived by Henry 4th, and his minister Sully, and have been ever since uniformly pursued. And, is it in this state of things that the hon. gentleman is to come, and, with a voice than which an enemy's ambassador could propose nothing more dangerous, to call to us, that we have nothing left but to trust to time and chance; to be quiet, lest we should be attacked; to dread the force of a population so much superior to our own: to hope well of our commerce, but to be comforted in the thought, that, when our trade and wealth are ravished from us, we shall have nothing left to provoke an enemy's desires? Did Buonaparte send a friend to solicit the interests of his ambition in this country; what else could he wisely enjoin him, to dissolve all manly resolution in the hearts of our people, than by such arguments to impress a general persuasion of the necessity to lay us hopelessly down in the charms of such a peace? Examples had been quoted from history, to show that France was weakened by her conquests; that she would break in pieces like the Roman empire; but what consolation did this give? The Roman empire had subsisted 400 years in all its extent; and if France were to over-run all Europe, it surely was no great comfort to think that, by some accident in the course of 400 years, it might again be rescued! From a comparison between the safety of peace and the safety of war, he inferred, that war would have enabled us to secure more than peace gave us a chance of securing. He then adverted with severity to the language which had been held as to continental connections; that we were "too honest" to deal with the princes of the continent, &c. He said that the complaints against the continental powers in this war were ill-founded. We had given money; but surely it would not be said that, doing so, we had done more than Austria, which had contributed the bravery and the blood of her armies. It was not true that Austria abandoned us. She gave up the contest, not yielding, but, as it were, driven out of the line. He reprobated the unfeeling language of those who said that Austria had done nothing in comparison with us. A day might come when such reproaches from us would be remembered by the continental powers. Nothing could more tend to alienate those powers from us, and a day might come when it might be necessary for us to look for their co-operation or their aid. With respect to what had been said against all deep-laid schemes, and all plans in concert with other powers, being unadvisable, and that we should trust to chance, it was reversing the old maxim, "nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia!" it was abandoning wisdom, making a surrender of reason and resigning ourselves to chance.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that the speech of the right hon. gentleman ran precisely in the same strain of gloomy despondency as that which he had delivered on the motion for the address. In the present instance, however, his arguments were applicable to a state of war, as well as to a state of peace; though certainly to the latter in the greater degree. The drift of his arguments was, to establish the proposition, that after balancing the considerations on both sides, the country would, upon the whole, be less insecure were it restored to that state from which it was taken by the treaty of Amiens. The right hon. gentleman spoke of the evils which would have been averted had the country remained in the former situation; that the French would not at present be in possession of Louisiana or of St. Domingo, and that

Digitized by Google

the British fleet would retain the superiority in the Mediterranean. The true question, however, for the consideration of the House was, whether upon the whole it were better, for the sake of averting those comparatively lesser evils, to plunge the country again into the calamities of war? The effect of the right hon. gentleman's arguments was not only to renew, but to render war perpetual. A noble lord had advanced a proposition which was not maintainable; namely, that it was impossible hostilities could be renewed. To this proposition he would ever oppose a decided negative. On the first discussion of the question of peace, he had expressly stated, that the war was not discontinued on account of any deficiency in the means of carrying it on; he had disclaimed the plea of necessity, and scouted the idea that this country was driven to the alternative of peace. He therefore would have no hesitation in asserting, that were the honour of the country touched, or its security in danger, it would not only be possible to renew hostilities, but it possessed the means of supporting a contest of seven or eight years duration, without imposing any burthens upon the people but such as would, under all the circumstances of the case, be borne with cheerfulness. With respect to what had fallen from a noble relative of his lordship's in another place, it was impossible for that noble lord to aver, after the part he had taken, that he would not have treated with the present government of France; or to say, that he would not have advised treaties formed on the basis of those proposed at Paris or at Lisle. It could not be contended therefore, when the retention of Ceylon, Trinidad, and the Cape was urged only as the first proposition, that the terms on which the noble lord he alluded to had obviously been willing to conclude peace, could constitute any material difference in the relative situation of either country, compared with the terms of the treaty of Amiens. To return to the observations of the noble lord himself, his declared object was, to change the persons who administered the government of the country. He had described the situation in which he conceived the country to stand; and his principal if not sole charge against ministers was, the imputation of a want of energy and vigour. He would, however, ask the noble lord, what part of their conduct, either before the signature of the preliminary, or in the occurrences since that period, could justify such an imputation? Was there any deficiency in that respect manifested when they dispatched a powerful fleet to the Baltic, in order to follow up with vigour and effect the plan laid by their predecessors for destroying the northern confederacy? or in the means adopted to secure the country from external attack, at a time when the preparations of the enemy menaced us with invasion? Did they betray any degree of neglect or lassitude, when finding by the first intelligence from Egypt that the occasion called for the exertion, they sent regiments of infantry and corps of cavalry to reinforce the army in that quarter? or in detaching a squadron with sir James Saumarez from the force under lord Nelson, to block up the enemy in the harbour of Cadiz, or to defeat them on their own coasts? He could therefore with confidence defy the noble lord to point out a single instance where the conduct of ministers betrayed a want of promptitude or vigour. But, at the period of the peace, the noble lord possibly might say, that all their energy and vigour deserted them. At that eventful period, it appeared, they incurred the censure of the noble lord. In respect to this, he would again ask the noble lord, what specific charge he could urge against them? Was it imputable to them, that the power and influence of France had extended since that period? With a reference to that consideration, could the noble lord justly impute to them a want of energy or vigour? He could not. In one instance, however, he would admit, ministers might possibly have been charged with a want of attention to the strength and security of the country; namely, if they had reduced the establishments which the noble lord, and others on his side of the question, had at one time recommended. He hoped, therefore, the noble lord would expressly state the grounds upon which he brought his charge. If the noble lord should not state some specific grounds, he should be inclined to suspect that his wish was only for a change in the persons of those who administered his majesty's government; that their real crime in the noble lord's eyes was, their continuing to enjoy the confidence of their sovereign, and being instrumental in giving peace to the country. On the meeting of parliament in the October following the period he had

Digitized by Google

alluded to, he had said, that the House, under all the circumstances of the case, were to determine the points then at issue between him and those on the side of the noble lord. He had said then, that if the pacification had the effect of lulling us into a blind security, it would prove, instead of a blessing, a real misfortune; but he at the same time said, that its best prospect of duration lay in our rendering ourselves secure; and that our security was founded in our strength. With respect to what had fallen from an hon. gentleman, relative to the language which had lately appeared in the public prints of the respective countries, he concurred in all his observations; the steps which appeared to be taken for the purpose of producing excesses, he must say, were unworthy the good sense, the prudence, and the manners of the countries. At the same time, he wished not to be understood to say that a finger should be laid upon the freedom of the British press upon that account; God forbid! as the worst consequences such could produce, were light and insignificant, compared with the effect of such an outrage! However, language as reprehensible had proceeded from the other side of the water as what had issued from the press of this country. He had, on a former occasion, stated the degree of his apprehensions from those whose language and exaggerated statements went to place the two countries in a state of hostility: on the other hand, apprehensions were to be entertained from the line of conduct recommended by those who would make any compromise for the preservation of peace. It was the duty and the intention of those who administered his majesty's government to steer between both extremes; and to observe a line of moderation founded upon those principles, in which they deemed the honour and the security of the country to consist. In pursuing that course, they relied upon the approbation of their country, and the support of that House; and from such a course they would not be diverted. On the great and salutary objects they had in view, they would endeavour steadily to fix their eyes, and not to suffer any part of their conduct to militate against the honour of their sovereign, or the true interests of the country.

Lord *Morpeth*, in allusion to the comparison between the *projet* of lord Grenville and the treaty of Amiens, observed that by the *projet* all the interests of this country would have been fully secured, with the advantage of preserving our fidelity to our allies, Portugal, and the house of Orange.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, it was not fair to institute a comparison between a *projet* which was not an ultimatum, and might have been modified, and a treaty actually concluded. At the same time he contended that the treaty of Amiens had secured as effectually in the *projet*, all the interests of this country, with an equal fidelity to our allies; for an indemnity to the prince of Orange had been stipulated: and although Portugal invaded by a French army, had made a separate peace, we had obtained modifications favourable to her interests.

Mr. *Canning* contended that in the case in question the *projet* was a real ultimatum. It was not, as in ordinary cases, a first offer, expected to be reduced by subsequent discussion, but it was presented at the desire of the enemy. It was so framed as to exclude cavil, and it was such as the government was prepared at the time to make their appeal to the country as the test of their moderation. This he could state with something like certainty.

The Address was agreed to *nem. con.*

Debate on the Navy Estimates.] Dec. 2. Mr. Alexander brought up the report of the committee of supply. On the motion that the resolution for granting 50,000 seamen for the service of the ensuing year be read a second time,

Mr. *T. Grenville* said:—I rise, Sir, to express my astonishment at the mode of proceeding which is now proposed; a mode which places the House of Commons in quite a new situation. The minister demands an extraordinary supply of seamen, without condescending to give the least explanation of the reasons which induce the necessity, or the purposes to which he means to apply them. Such conduct is unprecedented, and the House will subscribe to its own disgrace, if it assent to this proposition until the necessary explanation shall be given. The vote in the committee passed without a single observation. Ministers have not thought proper to tell us any of the grounds upon which they have deemed it expedient thus to demand a large disposable force, productive of great expense, without informing us what danger we have to dread, and how far the force demanded will tend to avert that danger. The speech from the

Digitized by Google

throne contained not a sentiment which was not applicable to any period of our history; it was a collection of truisms, without any opinion, or statement peculiarly referring to the present times. How different was the conduct of ministers at the peace of 1763, and at that of 1783. Now, for the first time, a minister opens a session in time of peace with a speech composed of general terms, and applies to parliament for a vote of 50,000 seamen, without describing the necessity which calls for such a force, or enabling us to judge how far this force may be proportioned to that necessity. When the minister, in June last, proposed a vote of 70,000 seamen, he was asked, what would be his probable peace establishment, and he replied, about 30,000. Why, then, does he now require 50,000? What change has taken place in our position? What new and unexpected dangers have arisen? Before we assent to the proposition, I trust the minister will present such materials for our consideration, as may fully qualify us to decide this question. The question upon which we are to determine is this: what is the danger that threatens us, and is the state of our resources and preparation equal to resist it? Among the dangers that threaten us, let us consider the maritime state of Europe. When we look at Russia, in the first instance, we unfortunately find a strong partiality in that power towards the views of France, at least for some time back; though from the moderate character of the present emperor, and some late circumstances, there may be reason to hope that our former relations of cordial friendship with that cabinet will be re-established. I am aware that, in adverting to the northern confederacy, I tread on delicate grounds; but, in my opinion, what is called the convention, did not satisfactorily settle the point in dispute with that confederacy; and what the noble secretary of state termed the explanatory convention, involved the matter in still greater perplexity. However, my principal reason for alluding to that confederacy is, to take notice of an expression made use of, on a former occasion, by the noble secretary of state. That noble lord said, that the victory of Copenhagen created an obstacle in the treaty with the northern confederacy, which rendered it the most difficult negotiation in which he had ever been engaged. I must then remark, that the British statesman who could experience a difficulty in his negotiation with an enemy, from one of the most glorious victories ever obtained by the British fleet, and over that very enemy, affords no very flattering prospect of the consequences likely to ensue from his dexterous management at the court of Petersburgh, or at any other court in Europe.—But to proceed to a review of the maritime powers of Europe. In Holland, no one can be ignorant that unparalleled exertions are making to restore their navy; that a considerable number of large vessels are now building, and that many have been launched since the peace; and still greater efforts are making to recruit the fleets of France. Before, therefore, we undervalue the naval force of France, we should consider the extent of the whole naval force of Europe; and more, that every acquisition she makes is a deduction from us; that it tells doubly against us; for every cession of territory to France, is an exclusion of England. In the event of a war, the influence she has established on the continent would be sufficient utterly to exclude us; for what assistance could we hope to derive from Portugal? That country dare not, perhaps would not interfere. Let us only consider the state of the Portuguese, from the insult recently offered to a British officer in the port of Lisbon, in the presence of our sovereign's son. Perhaps it may be stated, that some satisfaction has been had; but I would ask, could such an indignity have been offered at a former period to the British flag, while Portugal had the power or the will to respect us? The subserviency of Spain to France no man can doubt, and the endeavours of France to exclude us from every port in the Mediterranean; her pretensions in Africa, and wherever she can interfere with the interests of our navy, must excite the attention of every man. The Morea and the Republic of the Seven Isles are not even safe from her attacks; day after day adds something to her conquests; and if the last rumour can be credited, it is in contemplation to add Tuscany to her dominions. On the subject of Switzerland I cannot help saying a few words. I have been told that a gentleman, holding a high situation, was a considerable time during the disturbances in Switzerland, resident at Constance, and held frequent conferences with the principal directors of the Swiss insurrection. If this anecdote be true, it does not tally with the assertion, that mi-

Digitized by Google

nisters have not committed the honour of the country. To return to the Mediterranean: the French government have succeeded in completely depriving us of every port in that sea, except Malta; and if government do their duty, they will retain that island. It is, I understand, retained; but why, I am ignorant. Is it only held until the court of Petersburgh agrees to guarantee it? and does that court decline to join in that guarantee, notwithstanding the positive assertions of the minister that she would? I have no hesitation in saying, that it is incumbent on ministers to retain all the places covenanted by treaty to be given up, which are still in our possession. From the conduct of France since the peace, such a proceeding would be consistent with justice, equity, and policy.—If in Europe the prospect is so discouraging, is there any consolation to be derived from the West or East Indies? Certainly not. We have every reason to apprehend danger to our colonies, particularly Jamaica from the force in St. Domingo; and that danger is aggravated, from a consideration of the force at Louisiana, and the recent cession of Martinique. If so, it is of moment to ascertain whether ministers, at the time they were calling for 50,000 seamen, in the apprehension of war, were justified in giving up the key of the French islands. Wherever we turn our eyes, we must see the progressive aggrandizement of France. She is, I understand, immediately to take possession of Cochin, in the East Indies, a place of no commerce, which can afford no attraction in that way. Then the only use it can be of is, that it will afford opportunities of negotiating with the native powers. In such a state of our affairs, can the House confirm the resolution of the committee of supply, without some explanation from ministers, whether we are to be at war or peace? If the right hon. gentleman will show a necessity for his force, no rational Englishman can object to the vote.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said:—After the confident expectations of security which his majesty's speech was calculated to excite, was not the proposition of a considerable force naturally to be expected? But the right hon. gentleman and his friends vary their charges so frequently, that one is scarcely heard, when it is destroyed by another. Some time since it was argued, that a large establishment was indispensably necessary, and it was asserted that ministers had most improvidently reduced the public force, though the navy now actually retained exceeded that in the first year of the last war. With respect to the allusion to the peace of 1783, though his majesty's speech of that day speaks confidently of peace, yet 26,000 seamen were voted for the navy. The grounds upon which the right hon. gentleman opposes the present vote, are rather singular, considering his desire to keep up a strong defensive force. Such is also the desire of government; any reduction would be unadvisable for some time, and in a few days the secretary at war will submit a proposition to the House for a larger establishment for the army than was ever known in time of peace. I am not disposed to shrink from the declaration, that in the present situation of Europe it is necessary to maintain a strong defensive system. My opinion is, that our best security will consist in the consciousness of our strength. On that principle I have acted, and with that view I proposed this vote. I have no objection to follow the right hon. gentleman in his review of the state of Europe. As to Petersburgh, the right hon. gentleman will pardon me, if I decline to give him any precise answer on that subject; I shall give no positive contradiction to what he has stated; but I will say that he ought to have inquired a little farther before he hazarded an assertion, which must be heard from him with surprise and regret. The right hon. gentleman has misconceived the statement of my noble friend, on a former day, respecting the victory off Copenhagen. He did not say that the victory created the difficulties of the negotiation with the northern confederacy, but, that even after that victory many difficulties remained to be adjusted. The right hon. gentleman has adverted to the activity of the Dutch to recruit their navy; but is it a matter of wonder, that a power, which at one period of the war, mustered a respectable navy, and which, at the termination of the war, only retained sixteen, should be anxious to repair her fleets? Though the increase of every fleet likely at any period to be employed against us, may be a subject of lamentation, yet it formed no ground of complaint against ministers, unless that degree of exertion in foreign powers should be met by supineness on our part; but could any such imputation attach? I feel confident that it cannot. The right hon. gentleman was in

Digitized by Google

error when he stated, that the navy of France and the navy of Europe were synonimous terms. I admit that present appearances naturally induce the belief, that those of Spain and Holland are intimately attached to France; but whatever may be their force, are we unprepared to meet them combined? No. For the insult to the British officer in the port of Lisbon the most ample satisfaction was readily given. The fleets of France, Spain, and Holland, stood thus at the beginning of the war: France 105 sail of the line, Spain 79, and Holland 27. What was the result of the war, which covered this country with so much glory? Why, that at the conclusion of the war, France had but 39, Spain 68, and Holland 16. What addition can there have been made, by building new ships, to such a force, to excite alarm in the breast of an Englishman, when I state that we have at present 192 sail of the line, 209 frigates, 129 sloops, and 243 smaller craft? With an excess of 60 sail of the line above the combined fleets of France, Spain, and Holland, what have we to fear; and what apprehension can be felt for our safety, when it is known, that in case of the renewal of hostilities, 50 sail of the line can be prepared for sea within one month, and even a larger number, should the exigency be pressing? Thus are we situated, ready for any event. Whether this state of preparation proves that want of energy on the part of administration, which the right hon. gentleman attributes to them, I leave the House and the country to determine. It is our sincere wish to maintain peace; but if the honour of the country should be wounded, or its security endangered, it is our determination to be in a state to meet the enemy. I hope the establishment now proposed will not long exist. I should be sorry to consider it the permanent peace establishment. When the circumstances of Europe shall render it proper to reduce our force to the most economic standard, I shall feel most sincerely happy; but the arrival of that period, and the security of peace, will depend much on the acquiescence of the House in this vote.

Sir *Sidney Smith* expressed considerable regret, at the great reductions which were suddenly made, both in the king's dock-yards, and in the navy in general. A prodigious number of men had been thus reduced to the utmost poverty and distress; and it might be apprehended that they would be obliged to seek employment from foreign states. Whatever reluctance they might feel to this, they might, by dire necessity, be compelled to it. On this ground he wished the number of seamen to be employed were considerably greater than it is; for he knew, from his own experience, that what was called an ordinary seaman, could hardly find employment at present, either in the king's or in the merchants' service. He had himself been present at some of the changes which had taken place in France; they resembled more the changes of scenery at a theatre than any thing else. Every thing was done for stage effect, and whether it was the death of Cæsar, the fall of Byzantium; or the march of Alexander, it seemed to Frenchmen almost equally indifferent. If the invasion of Britain was to be produced, it might have stage effect enough to draw 400,000 volunteers to join in the procession. Under those circumstances, he wished that this country should always be in a situation to call together speedily a strong naval force, to frustrate any attempts on the part of the enemy.

Mr. *Sturges* supported the resolution, from his idea of the necessity of a large establishment; but expressed surprise that ministers had assigned no reason for this increase, and earnestly hoped that it would be yet possible to continue in peace.

Captain *Markham* defended the conduct of the admiralty board, in contradiction of the instances adduced by sir Sidney Smith.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, it certainly was not usual to introduce the votes for the service of the army and navy, by any specific explanation of the circumstances which appeared to render such an establishment necessary. What bore on this point in his majesty's speech did, however, clearly point out to the House that a proposition of the kind now offered was in contemplation. The language which the hon. gentlemen on the other side held on the present occasion, was contrary to all parliamentary precedent. He remembered on one occasion, when a right hon. gentleman, late at the head of administration, proposed, in a time of peace, a larger establishment than usual, another hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox), though then acting in opposition to the measures of government, said, that if they would assure the House that there were circumstances in the state of Europe to justify the measure,

Digitized by Google

he should support it. Ministers at this moment were entitled to confidence on the same principles. They might fairly contend, that, in the present circumstances of Europe, such an increased establishment was necessary. They did not wish, however, to rest the proposition on such a foundation. Without saying any thing about private negotiations which might exist, he put it to the House whether there did not exist in Europe at this moment such known circumstances as, independent of any other consideration, fully justified ministers in proposing a large naval establishment? He was aware that, consistently with a very laudable principle of economy, small establishments were held to be desirable. It had long appeared to him, however, that this system of low establishments was founded in very mistaken policy. It had been proved by the history of the wars of this country, that it was not till a late period that we were enabled to put forth all our energies, and though ultimately successful, we were always foiled in the first instance. With reference to economy, therefore, he would contend for the policy of a large establishment. In the prospect of a renewal of war, this was particularly obvious, since commencing a war with a small establishment, a considerable proportion was withdrawn from active service, and employed in recruiting our armies, reduced to a mere skeleton. So much, he said, on the general principle of establishments. But, on the avowed principles of gentlemen on the other side, it was unnecessary for him to offer any thing in defence of the proposition now before the House. With the annexation of Belgium and Holland to France, with the immense influence she had acquired over dependent states, with the views with which she had at all times regarded the interests of this country, to propose an establishment not greater than had existed in any former peace, would be to propose the greatest absurdity. Circumstances in Europe, known and admitted, were the grounds on which ministers offered the present proposition for the establishment of the year 1803. After that period had expired, it would again become the duty of the House, under an enlarged consideration of what the relative situation of this country and Europe might be, to determine whether the same establishment should be maintained, increased, or reduced.

Mr. *Canning* said, he had heard his noble friend with great pleasure; and if the speech he had delivered had preceded that which gave rise to this debate, he believed the debate itself would have been rendered unnecessary. He, however, agreed entirely with the proposition of setting forth the inquiry which produced that speech; for if ministers had maintained an entire silence, he did not think the House could have been warranted in proceeding upon the measure now proposed to them in the manner in which ministers seemed to have expected. He observed that parliament proceeded to the discussion of his majesty's speech, under circumstances that were agreed to be very alarming; so much so, that extraordinary armaments were deemed to be necessary. With the explanation given by his noble friend he professed himself in general, to be satisfied. Circumstances had attended these estimates, which never attended any other in time of peace or war. The proposal for the augmentation was originally for three months, the vote of that night proposed it for the year. Now, wherefore should that vote be continued for the year. If there had been no change in our circumstances since the discussion of his majesty's speech, he must lament the fluctuation which had taken place in our councils, and which rendered it necessary that this establishment should be voted for a year instead of three months. He begged to subscribe, however, to what the noble lord had stated in explanation that night. He rejoiced in the explanation which had been given, for it would afford to the people a knowledge of their true situation. It did not, however, follow, that ministers were advocates for war, by the preparations they were now making; they might see this country, at present, without such a preparation, in more danger than if it were in a state of war. Nothing could be more distant from his intentions than to convey the slightest disrespect of his noble friend; nor could he be supposed to allude to any deficiency either in the talents or the zeal of his noble friend, for the full discharge of the office which he held. He thought, however, that the House was entitled to expect some explanation upon the subject of Switzerland. What he wished to know was, whether the honour of the country was in any way committed upon that question? He was satisfied that the circumstances of Europe required the present augmentation,

Digitized by Google

and, perhaps, greater; and therefore it had his most cordial concurrence.

The *Attorney General* said, that the course which this debate had taken was so extraordinary, that he felt great difficulty in offering himself to the House; and yet he knew not how to suffer the debate to pass unnoticed. It was most extraordinary that persons of the sentiments which had been professed that night, and on former occasions, should have accompanied those sentiments with the observations he had heard. A compliment was expressed by the right hon. gentleman who spoke last, to his majesty's ministers, for the vote which they now proposed to the House; and yet he censured them for observing a perfect silence and reserve, or rather concealment of the reason they had for proposing such vote, which reason, when given, was that which was perfectly notorious, so that ministers were censured for being silent on what had been already spoken, reserved on what had been already communicated, and for concealing that which was already notorious, namely, that they proposed this vote on the state of things, as known already to every man in the country. This was certainly very curious but who were they that complained upon this occasion? Not those who, by their former declarations, had given them to understand they expected the peace establishment to be reduced; but the complaint came from those who agreed in the vote, and thought it came at the present time with peculiar propriety. A very exaggerated statement had been made of the forces of France, and of the inadequacy of the resources of this country to meet those forces. To those gentlemen who dealt so much in amplification in both ways, he would only say, that whilst their declamations were so much at variance with their sentiments, their opposition to ministers could never be considered in any other shape than government votes; so that, in whatever way impartial persons considered this dissertation it would have all the appearance of debate, while nothing existed upon which there was a fundamental difference. Yet, if any one had entered the House in the middle of the speech of any of those who so laboured in epithets to paint the dangers of the country and the state, he would have supposed the danger so imminent, that nothing could save us. From all this, therefore, he had a right to infer that men, not measures, were the objects of attack; that those so violent in their phillippics against ministers, were only actuated by a violent desire for their places; for he was persuaded, that could they only supplant them, from the knowledge he entertained of their talents and their zeal, they would pursue precisely the very same principles.

Dr. *Laurence* said, that as to the vote of 50,000 seamen, he was persuaded it was wholly inefficient. If we looked to France, we should find that, since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, she had increased her army nearly 100,000 men; her navy she was increasing in the same manner. He was of opinion, that we should keep up ship for ship with that country, and seaman for seaman, if we expected to be safe. He was of no party, and he could not be arraigned of seeking the places of any party; he was content with the produce of an honourable profession, and possessed no ambition beyond it. He therefore was not to be coupled with any of those whom the learned gentleman might allude to. As we never had obtained actual peace from France, so we ought to consider our situation as that of the most destructive kind of warfare, and be on the alert to meet it in every way that God and nature pointed out to us. He would vote for the resolution, because, small as the number was, it was better than nothing, laying upon the heads of ministers all the responsibility of their measures, after the timely admonitions they had thus repeatedly heard.

The resolution was agreed to.

Debate on the Army Estimates.] Dec. 8. The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Supply to which the Army Estimates were referred,

The *Secretary at War* said:—I rise, Sir, to propose the establishment of the army for the ensuing year; and before I enter into the particulars of the statement, I beg leave to offer a short general view of the motives and circumstances which induce his majesty's ministers to require such a force. The estimates now on the table exceed in number and expense any thing that this country has known in any former period of peace. The main question for the decision of the House is, whether the circumstances of the present times be such as to render such a force as is now proposed necessary, and if this should be decided in the affirmative, it will then remain to determine whether the division and description of the force be

Digitized by Google

the most eligible, and whether its distribution be such as is best accommodated to the exigencies of the public service. That in the present time a larger force is necessary for the security of Great Britain, than at former periods of peace, it is hardly necessary for me to waste time in attempting to prove. The circumstances of Europe, and the relative situation of this country, are too obvious to escape the observation of any thinking man. The overgrown power of France, arrived to a magnitude beyond that which the ambition of Louis 14th projected; the menacing attitude of that country, the ambition and enterprise of its present government, have not only brought these feelings home to every British spirit, but have also impressed them deeply on every rational mind in Europe. The state of the question has already been distinctly laid down, as to the conduct we are to pursue under these circumstances; to maintain the present peace as long as we can with honour; to fulfil the conditions of it, as far as depends on us, with exactness and good faith; to abstain from all irritating language, but to resist all hostile aggression. It is our duty to be well prepared, and our preparations should be strong, as well on land as at sea. Our navy alone, however great, is not sufficient to guard the whole extent of our possessions, widely as they are spread through every quarter of the globe it will be sufficient to remind the committee, that France is now in possession of the Netherlands, of Holland, of the course of the Maese and the Lower Rhine, and the fortresses on the banks of these rivers. This is the first time that parliament has been called upon to vote a peace establishment under such circumstances, and therefore I was much surprised when I heard an hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox) maintain, that there was no reason why a larger establishment than usual in former periods of peace should be maintained in Great Britain; and that there were reasons why even a smaller force would suffice every where but in the West Indies, for there even he did not think the increase unnecessary. Let the hon. gentleman consider, that in the last peace, Holland was friendly to us; the Netherlands were under the dominion of Austria; and the course of the Rhine, down from Alsace, was in the hands of friendly powers. Another circumstance material for consideration, is the actual military state of our neighbour, and his permanent establishment, of which I will take a short view, not with a design to excite any idea of keeping up a proportionate establishment here, but merely to show that there is a necessity for making some increase, if we wish to provide for our own security. The French military establishment for the present year consists of 84 regiments of cavalry, consisting each of four squadrons, at 150 men a squadron, 46,350; 110 demi-brigades of the line, and 130 of light infantry 341,000; 10 demi-brigades of veterans for garrisons 13,160; artillery 26,600; making a total regular established force of 427,110; and if to these are added 27 legions of gendarmerie, and other persons in arms, and liable to be called out, the French government has at command 929,900; Such being the geographical position, and such the military power of France, no man can deny the necessity of an increased establishment on our part. I have been long adverse to the parsimonious system of peace establishments. I am satisfied, that though no considerable evil has befallen this country in consequence of the smallness of its armed force in times of peace, much mischief might have befallen it, and our safety might have been much endangered, if the enterprise of our rivals had been proportioned to the hatred by which they now show themselves actuated towards us. No hope can be entertained of enjoying repose without a just sense of national security; nor has any nation a right to expect that it will remain unmolested, unless it possesses such means of defence as render it dangerous for any rival power to insult its honour or to invade its rights. Without these means of defence no treaty is secure: but with such means any treaty may remain inviolate for a number of years. The maintenance of standing armies is generally censured as being attended with certain expense, and being eventually dangerous to the constitution; and unquestionably the smallest standing army is so, unless constitutional, authorised, and established. But w know very well that ever since the Revolution, and in the best administered times of our constitution, such armies have been admitted and maintained. It has been said by an ancient writer, that good laws must be maintained by good armies, and good armies by good discipline. In these times it is impossible that laws or constitutions can be maintained, without a force capable of protecting and

Digitized by Google

securing our independence by sea and by land. I do not see how any objection can be made to the increase now proposed, and I go on this ground merely—the absolute necessity of such an augmentation; for if this augmentation be not necessary, then there is no need of any augmentation at all. But if it was deemed necessary in times of no danger to keep up 24,000, 30,000, and 40,000 men, surely it will not be deemed unnecessary, unadvisable, or unconstitutional, in these times of danger and difficulty, to maintain a greater number. It has been said, that armies, cannot be subsisted in times of actual war, but by husbanding the means of their support, and carrying the wealth and credit of the country to the highest. I am ready to allow, that the credit of the country ought to be maintained, and its wealth augmented as much as possible. If we omit to provide a military force proportioned to the urgency of occasions, our honour is compromised, and we are left exposed to danger without a resource. For when, according to the best information that can be collected from the most authentic sources, 100,000 men are the number sufficient for the security of the country, and fewer are deemed insufficient, the hon. gentleman cannot mean that the maintenance of that number is impolitic. Wealth, in my opinion, however it may be increased, cannot be deemed secure without a respectable military force. Money has, it is true, been called the sinew of war; but that sinew cannot preserve its tone, without a body, and the body here is an army ready to be resorted to without loss of time. I have to mention that Ceylon and Trinidad, newly added to our dominions, require an increase proportioned to their extent and importance, an absolute increase without any relative consideration of times or circumstances. It is meant to keep up three regiments of horse guards, and 27 of dragoon guards and dragoons, on the same regulation as in the last peace. The general division is to be 8 troops in a regiment, each troop to consist of 60 rank and file; of these, 10 to be dismounted. The dismounted men will be disciplined like the others, while they afford a saving to the public of 50,000*l.* a year; and at the same time can occasion no material delay, even in case of urgency, as horses are much more easily procured than men. The foot guards, as usual, to consist of 3 regiments, 1 of 8 battalions, and the other 2 of 2 battalions each: 75 men to a company, as the other regiments. The total of cavalry 17,250; total of foot guards 6,060; 102 battalions of foot, consisting of the numbered regiments up to the 93rd, with two battalions of the royals, the 2nd battalion of the 52nd, 5 battalions of the 60th, and 5 battalions of the 94th, at 75 rank and file a company, with the exception of those on India service, which are to have 75 men in a company, for the purpose of keeping up the numbers in that distant station. Six West India regiments, 6 of the 12 kept up last year having been reduced. These troops, consisting of men of colour, are found useful for many services in the West Indies, which Europeans cannot perform, and, when mixed with Europeans, form a very respectable force in the field: the 6 regiments consist of 4,158 men. To these are to be added the foreign corps, consisting of the king's German regiment, Stuart's regiment, which distinguished itself so much in Egypt; 3 Swiss regiments, those of Meuron, Rohan, and Watteville; making altogether 3,532 men. The staff corps, consisting of 4 companies, and the corps of waggoners, which had been found extremely useful. The total of this force, including the regiments serving in India, and counting officers, is 128,909.—I now come to the distribution: 60,000 rank and file, including 15,000 cavalry, are to serve as guards and garrisons in Great Britain and Ireland. A body of 30,000 men for the plantations, and the remainder of the force to be employed in India. I will now state, particularly the force in India, which consists of 3 regiments of dragoons, and 14 British regiments of foot, consisting of 16,100 men, and the regiment of Meuron, consisting of 1,150 men. The troops now in India cannot come home till late, and it is, therefore, difficult to give a precise statement respecting them. There are now 17 battalions there, and it is intended that 14 shall be kept there. The total expense of guards and garrisons, and the plantation estimate, including India, will be about 4,015,000*l.* [Here Mr. Fox asked across the table, whether the garrison battalions were included in this calculation? He believed that with them the whole force would be above 130,000 men.] The hon. gentleman is right. I did omit the garrison battalions, consisting of 5,000 men. It has been found expedient to form seven new garrison battalions on a better found-

Digitized by Google

ation; they are on a plan likely to prove more efficacious than the former, which rendered this force by no means adequate in service to the expense with which it bore upon the country. It has been thought expedient to abolish the name of "invalids," to which contemptuous ideas were attached, as if of a man walking on a crutch, and unable to manage a musket or a bayonet. It is intended that they shall be effective men, and they are to have a board of officers, by whom redress of all complaints is to be made. The difference of expense between these and the invalids is about 5,000*l.*, the difference between them and troops of the line is between 35 and 40,000*l.* The clothing for these corps is this year to be issued out of the king's stores, and consequently there are to be no charges incurred this year for clothing them. These battalions are able to occupy garrisons, and to do service in several posts which would otherwise be maintained by regiments of the line, consequently these regiments will be at liberty for other services.—I am now to notice to the committee the mode by which this plan is more economical than keeping up a smaller proportion of officers. First, the battalions and squadrons are really capable of service, without waiting to recruit, and admit of increase, without breaking the hearts of officers in the beginning of a war, by raising new corps, and bringing men into the field who had seen no service. The addition of 1 lieutenant and 25 men to each company in the cavalry, gives an addition of 5,000 in the infantry; 1 lieutenant and 25 men for each company give an increase of 250 rank and file in each battalion, and a total addition of 25,000 rank and file, with 1080 lieutenants. The whole addition thus made is 30,000 men, with the expense of only a few additional officers. By the addition of one company to each regiment of cavalry, and two to each regiment of infantry, there is a farther increase of 20,000 men.—All the services in the army department will amount to 5,270,000*l.* and all those annexed expenses not in the paper, including the half-pay to reduced officers, and the out-pensioners of Chelsea and Kilmainham, will not exceed the similar expenses in 1801. The expense of the military college is 7,000*l.*; and it is for the pleasure of parliament to grant a sum for the support of the Military Asylum. The total of the military expense will be about 5,500,000*l.* This expense is certainly great, but it is less than that of last year by 2,270,000*l.* and less than that of the last year of the war by 10,130,000*l.* A difficulty arose, from the army proposed to be kept up last year, but to which in fact, we could never arrive. There is an increase of 8,525 men this year, and an additional expense of 65,000*l.*; there has been, at the same time, a saving in several items. The expense of barracks is less by 300,000*l.*; and in the half-pay and other items there has been a proportionate diminution. In mentioning the increase of force since last year, I must notice a charge made on his majesty's ministers of having hastily, improvidently, and unwisely reduced the armed force of the country, when, as those persons themselves admitted, the increase now demanded was not too considerable. I will now proceed to show that these charges were without foundation. On the 1st of October 1801, there were under arms 250,000 men of all descriptions; of these, 123,343 men of all descriptions have been reduced. 1st, The cavalry amounted at that time to 25,000 men; a force not thought necessary, and for that reason, as well as because it was the most expensive, the reduction commenced with it, and 10,493 men were reduced. The militia of Great Britain and Ireland were discharged to the amount of 71,000 men. It is understood that the militia is always to be called out at the commencement of a war, and discharged on the conclusion of peace, but the fencible regiments come more strictly under this description, and were therefore immediately disbanded, to the number of 20,679 men. The invalids, to the number of 5,172 were reduced, because it had been resolved to form the out-pensioners into a more effectual force. The foreign corps were reduced to the number of 8,945 men; a force which we were glad to spare, and which, when any reduction was necessary, we thought it most politic to reduce; for when British troops were disbanded, who would think of maintaining foreigners, unless they were in situations where we could not dismiss them? All other descriptions of men dismissed, amounted to 7,025 men, which number alone constitutes the strict and regular difference between the British infantry, then and now. And if it be considered, that of these 7,000, some had enlisted to serve for a limited time, and though they were not strictly entitled to their discharge, yet as the act is so drawn as to give them

Digitized by Google

reason to think they were entitled to it, and many of them were induced to enlist, by having it so explained; it seemed inconsistent with that good faith which the government should always maintain with the people, to refuse to discharge them; but I can assure the gentleman who brought those charges, that no exertion was omitted to induce them to enlist regularly in other corps, and so many did enlist, that 19 or 20 battalions were filled up, while the reduction did not take away more than 6 or 7. Of these 7,000, many were discharged from the hospitals, and many were discharged for infirmities, on their return from long foreign service. This is the only foundation on which the charge of improvident reduction rests. But look at the force kept up, and the picture now afforded by the British army. This army was never more respectable, never in better subordination, never in better order than now, it was never composed of more able and efficient men, never actuated by a noble military spirit, with a number of able, experienced, and brave general officers, many of them in the flower of their age, uniting the vigour and enterprise of youth with the temper and wisdom of more advanced years; regulated by a prince possessed of an uncommon understanding in military affairs, indefatigable in his attention to business, and eminently just in discharging the duties of his office. For this respectable army, and the facility of augmenting its military force, the country is partly indebted to the hon. gentleman on the other side, who is entitled to the praise of having given us the command of such a force, with the facility of making an addition of 20,000 men; besides an easy resource in the militia of Ireland of 20,000 men more, exclusive of the yeomanry and volunteer corps, who have agreed to continue their services. Of these last, 8,000 rank and file have been already enrolled in Great Britain, chiefly cavalry. In Ireland the enrolment has been above double that number, amounting to 10,000 cavalry, and a still greater number of infantry. Putting all together, we have a total force of 200,000 men, exclusive of the army in India; a force of such a magnitude, and of such a description, as to present no very alluring prospect to any foreign power that may be disposed to attack us. I conclude, Sir, with moving, "That 66,574 men be voted for guards and garrisons in Ireland, from the 25th of Dec. 1802, to the 24th of Dec. 1803."

Mr. *Bankes* said, that if he disapproved of a high peace establishment, it was not because he thought less highly than others of the formidable power of France, but because he thought more highly of the natural means and resources of this country; and he did not like to waste those resources in guarding against a danger which did not exist. In former times it had been found that small peace establishments were sufficient to keep the country secure at home, and preserve its respectability abroad; but if we were now to make the military establishment of France the measure of our own, that could not be done without ruining the resources of the country. If this country was quiet and contented at home, he did not think it need to be panic-struck on hearing of half a million of men drawn up upon the shores of France. Our insular situation was to be estimated as a powerful defence, but, above all, we were to rely on the resources of the nation, when satisfied with its government. It was by public credit and confidence, and not from our population, that Great Britain had carried on so many wars with advantage and glory. He relied also on the great number of men trained and disciplined to arms, who are now in the country; he wished, instead of increasing, to diminish as much as possible, the expenses of the army, by allowing the soldiers leave of absence for a considerable part of the year, as had always been done upon the continent.

Sir *Eyre Coote* approved of the proposed increase of the military establishment, which in times like the present was, he conceived, necessary, to support the honour and dignity of the empire.

Earl *Temple* said, that consistently with the principles he had ever acted upon in that House, he could by no means oppose the increase which was now proposed, nor should he by any vote of his, either damp the spirits of the country, or check that spark of spirit which had, however tardily, been exhibited by his majesty's government. He gave full credit to the able speech which had been made by the secretary at war; but in that statement there was nothing which could enable the House to judge whether this was an estimate for a peace establishment, or for a war establishment. There was no language of the noble secretary which

Digitized by Google

appeared like telling France, as it was the duty of this country to do, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further." We were voting a large establishment, without any information on the subject. His lordship then condemned the general conduct of administration, and particularly their conduct with respect to the affairs of Switzerland; and on the whole he considered, that his majesty's ministers were not persons fit to be entrusted with the government of the country in times like the present.

General *Maitland* highly approved of the speech of the secretary at war; and thought that there was no occasion for any other argument to justify the vote, except the present situation of Europe. Besides the enormous power of France, the ruling passion of that people is now entirely for military enterprise; and their government is in the hands of a general, who if not the first and greatest now alive, is certainly the most ambitious and enterprising. He never gave a vote in parliament with greater pleasure than the present. It was for an establishment which would have all the effect of real economy, and a mode of securing to us peace, far better than could be effected by any seal that was ever put to the treaty.

General *Tarleton* stated, that he had uniformly voted against the late war, and had done so most conscientiously: but he should vote with pleasure for the increase now proposed, as he consided it absolutely necessary for the honour and security of the country—however great were the horrors of war, yet the horrors of seeing Buonaparté's flag on the Tower of London, or his political principles current in this country, were still more terrifying to him.

Mr. *Archdall* hoped the vote of that night, would be understood both at home and abroad as the cool decision of the representatives of a great nation, who wished to act in the spirit of the answer given to his majesty. It was not the dark manifesto of a perpetual dictator, but the voice of a great and free nation, adequately represented. He had often heard the situation of the country spoken of in the most desponding terms, by those very gentlemen who were for the most vigorous measures. They seemed to wish to vote the country to vigor, but to debate it to despair. He had heard that a general should not think lightly of his enemy, but that a common soldier should; now he saw no policy in describing our situation to the enemy, so as that they should despise both general and soldier: if what was said in the House passed no further, there would be no harm perhaps, in gentlemen speaking one way, and voting another: but as those things travelled far, it was very dangerous. The strength of France was also magnified; it was supposed by many, that her resources were founded on pillage, and its alliances on compulsion: if so, he saw no great reason for us to dread her power. If with our great resources, our loyalty firm, our honour untouched, our glorious navy, our army and people in a mass attached to our Constitution, we should yet be doomed to fall and be destroyed; he must say, there was something in it beyond human foresight, and therefore we must not be ashamed of our destruction.

Mr. *Cartwright* said, it was because he felt anxious for the preservation of peace that he should give his vote in favour of the estimate proposed; but he could not help thinking it extraordinary that his majesty's ministers should withhold all information as to the actual situation of this country with respect to France, and the stipulations of the treaty of peace.

Mr. *Whitbread* lamented that ministers had about them so much indecision; for at one time the minister told the House, that from the situation of affairs, he was convinced that 30,000 seamen would be sufficient; then, without any alteration in those affairs, 50,000 were proposed; and having given it as his opinion, that it would only be necessary to vote this force for a few months, then, without the least allegation of increased danger, the same minister, in a few hours afterwards, thought it proper to propose this force for the year. He condemned the language that had been so often repeated, of a determination to defend our honour, and not to bear insult: he thought that might be very well inferred, from what this country had formerly done; and that consequently such language was unnecessary, and not in the tone of true spirit. He did not seriously believe, that France meditated an attack upon this country, and thought the French government might as well pretend to be alarmed with the fears of an attack from this. Nations, as well as individuals, often retained ridiculous apprehensions of danger; we had once entertained strong apprehensions from

Digitized by Google

Dunkirk being fortified, and now we cared very little about its harbour. We were very much afraid of Jamaica too, when the French fleet sailed for St. Domingo; but those sort of fears cannot last a very long time: he did not see how the vote now proposed, could at all tend to diminish the power of France. He concluded by declaring, that it was with pleasure that he had seen the government of the country taken out of those hands, who had so misused it: and he dreaded the consequences of such men returning to power.

Mr. *Ryder* said, that if the proposed increase in our establishments did not take place, this country might bid a long adieu to all its greatness. But some gentlemen seemed inclined to think that navies were useless, armies something worse, and even all continental alliances absolutely detrimental. When we beheld the subjugation of the Swiss, and the progressive aggrandizement of France, were we to sit still, and suffer her to devour the rest of Europe, contented at her forbearance in making us the last whom she was to snap at? According to the observations of an hon. gentleman, we should remain quiet, in hopes that the first consul would in time remit his anger against us, and be satisfied with the punishment we had already suffered; but the same hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox) in this afforded us but little consolation, for, in his opinion we deserved that punishment, and the war ought to have terminated gloriously to France, and ingloriously for this country. The pacific sentiments of some gentlemen argued no small degree of inconsistency. At the time when a commercial treaty was negotiating between the two countries, the same gentleman opposed it, not so much on account of the terms, as the fear that the benefit we might derive from it might, on any future occasion, render us unwilling to to go to war, even though we should have provocation: yet they assumed a different tone now, when the question was respecting a war for our own immediate defence, and at a time when we were every where surrounded by France or its auxiliaries. The demand was for a military establishment, ready for any emergency that might arise, and not perhaps so much called for by any subsisting differences, but such as would place us in a situation to assist others, and perhaps, in some not very far distant day, oppose a barrier to the encroachments of our aspiring neighbours. Into what situation things might yet subside, must be left to time and circumstances to develope, and no reliance could be placed upon pledges or previous dispositions exhibited by that House. In the reign of Queen Anne, parliament had passed a resolution, that no peace should be made with France while she retained an inch of the Spanish territory; yet that object was wholly abandoned at the peace of Utrecht. So also, in 1741, the parliament voted, that no peace should be made until the Spaniards renounced the right of search on the coast of America; but the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was made without ever mentioning the subject. It was true, that heretofore we had always peace establishments comparatively small; but at no former period were we ever totally destitute of all continental alliances and connexions. The House was not, however, now called upon for a pledge of any kind; but as our resources were but little impaired, he conceived it to be the duty of every man to bear his share in the expenses of an increased establishment, lest the burthen should afterwards fall with accumulated weight upon us.

Mr. *Sheridan* rose and said:—Sir, being in the situation alluded to by the right hon. gentleman who has just sat down, of not being able to agree precisely with any of those who have preceded me, yet of being, at the same time, unwilling to give a silent vote on the present occasion, I rise with some sentiments of reluctance. There is one thing, however, in which we all coincide; it is, that the crisis in which we are are placed, is so big with tremendous importance, so pregnant with mighty difficulties, so full of apprehensions and dangers, that the House and the country have a right to know what are the intentions and the views of those by whose exertions we may expect to be extricated from the complication of embarrassments, and snatched from the very brink of destruction. Sir, one of the circumstances I most regret in this debate is, the references that have been made to the characters and abilities of persons supposed to be fit to fill particular offices. I feel this as a subject of regret, and feeling so, I am sorry that my hon. friend near me made any allusion even to one man, whom of all men upon earth, I most love and respect, because I do view the crisis to be one of such moment and peril, and because, if ever there was a time in which

Digitized by Google

we should prove to the people of England that we are above all party feelings, that we are above all party distinctions, that we are superior to any petty scramble for places and power, that time is the present.—Sir, in speaking upon these topics, I do find a disposition in some gentlemen to rebuke any man who shall deliver any opinion with respect to the first consul of France. One hon. gentleman, who rebuked an hon. general that spoke before him, declared that he would not give his opinion with respect to the conduct of France to Switzerland; and what does his rebuke amount to? He confesses that upon that subject there can be but one opinion. Why then, Sir, he either adopts the opinion of the hon. general or not. If he does adopt it, he gives as strong an opinion against the conduct of France as can possibly be given. If he does not adopt it, why then all we can say is, that there are two opinions. But what, he asks, has Switzerland to do with the question? It has this to do with it. The hon. general introduced the subject in this way; he contends that a power which is capable of such unprovoked aggression, and such perfidy, is the power that ought to be watched. But the hon. gentleman goes on to assert, that we have nothing to do with the case of Switzerland, nothing to do with France, nothing but with her power:—nothing but her power!—as if that were little. He asks too where is the great difference between France under the Bourbons and under her present ruler? Why, Sir, the hon. general inferred, from the conduct of France, that with her growing power she had a growing disposition to mischief. But is that power, demands the hon. gentleman, greater now than it was last June? Perhaps it is not, Sir. But her mischievous disposition is greater; and if I am asked to bring a proof of the truth of my assertion, I must bring the case of Switzerland. Sir, if I see a purposed contempt of the independence of a nation; if I see a perfidious disregard of the faith of treaties; if I see a power withdraw her assistance, only to return and entrap a country of freemen with greater certainty, why then I say there has been a change, and a great change too, and that such a power we have a right to watch. But, says the hon. gentlemen, we have no right to make use of invectives against the first consul of France. I will abstain if I can; I say if I can, because I feel that even a simple narrative may be construed into invective. With regard to the general question of a disposition to peace or war, I, for one, declare, that I am as strongly and as sincerely for the preservation of peace as any man, and that I do not consider war as any remedy for the evils complained of. If a war spirit be springing up in this country, if a chivalrous disposition be observable, if a sentiment of indignation be rising upon the subject of the treatment of Switzerland, I, for one, shall contend that the treatment of Switzerland is no cause of war. I would therefore say, preserve peace if possible: peace if possible, because the effects of war, always calamitous, may be calamitous indeed, buckling, as we should be forced to do, all our sinews and strength to that power in a contest with her upon such grounds. I repeat, therefore, peace if possible; but I add, resistance, prompt, resolute, determined resistance to the first aggression, be the consequences what they may. Influenced by these sentiments, I shall vote cordially and cheerfully for this large peace establishment; and it is because I shall vote for it, that I think myself bound to state my reasons. Sir, some gentlemen seem to consider what they advance as so many axioms too clear to need explanation or to require defence. But when I vote so large an establishment, I think myself not at liberty to bind such a burthen upon my constituents, without stating the grounds upon which I act, and the principles by which I am prompted. Sir, I have listened with all the attention I am master of to the different arguments that have been advanced in the present debate. One hon. gentleman who spoke second, appears to be a decided enemy to a great establishment, and the reasons he gave for his opposition, I confess, perfectly astonished me. Luckily he has no rapid flippancy in his manner; his sentiments are delivered too soberly and sedately to be mistaken. I am sure I mean nothing disrespectful to that gentleman, who amply repays the attention that is paid to him. But he says, if ministers had only said to him that danger existed, he would, for one, have voted for the force proposed. Does he doubt the danger? He complains that his majesty's ministers do not state it precisely. But does he pretend that he does not see and feel it? Can any one look at the map of Europe and be blind to it? Can any one have a

Digitized by Google

heart to resist apprehended injury, and say that we ought not to be prepared; but he asks, why raise only 110,000 men? You can never equal the military power of France, and as you cannot, why stop at 110,000? Why not raise 120, 130, 140,000? If this argument be worth any thing, it applies equally to our raising only 1,000. Why, if we can never be equal to France, raise a man? Another gentleman, who spoke last, has alluded to alliances, and I agree perfectly with him in what he advanced against making any pledges. He has alluded to the fate of the pledges made in the war of the succession, in the war of 1741; but if he meant to be impartial, he need not have gone back so far: he need not have travelled beyond the last war; he might have mentioned the pledges then given; he might have recollected the pledge of never giving up the Netherlands; he might have recalled to our minds the pledge of obtaining indemnity for the past, and security for the future; he might have dwelt upon the pledge of exhausting the last drop of our blood in the contest for religion, order, and civilized society, the *toto certatum corpore regni*; he might have reminded us of all these pledges made, and of all of them having been abandoned. He confesses his warmth of friendship for the late minister, and he certainly never showed it more than in stopping so short with his historical narrative of pledges. The next excellent reasoning of the hon. gentleman who spoke second against the proposed vote is, that the first year of war there will be an immense army drawn upon the opposite coast, and therefore, now it is not necessary to be prepared. When the army is upon your shores, when the trumpet of the enemy sounds at your gates, then it is time to be prepared. Appearance of security, he contends, gives often, the effect of security. If we have large armies, France will think we raise them through fear; if we do not have them, she will think that we feel ourselves perfectly secure. I have heard instances, Sir, where mounting wooden guns upon a fort has produced the same security as if there had been real ones. But unluckily in this instance for us, by our constitutional form of proceeding, our whole force must be known: we cannot pass upon an enemy wooden guns, and an army at Brentford. If we vote no force, an enemy will know we have none. But have no arms, throw away your guns, is the advice of the hon. gentleman. Sir, when every house in my neighbourhood has been attacked and robbed by a gang of ruffians, how my having no arms is to save me from a visit from them, I must leave the hon. gentleman to explain. His next argument is, that it is unreasonable in us to believe that Buonaparté wishes to be at war with us; for he thinks the French have nothing to gain by invasion. Nothing to gain? What else have they to lose but that of which it has been said they have so much to spare, and what have they not to gain? Sir, I cannot but think this as unbecoming a sentiment as ever was uttered. But it is unreasonable to think that the French wish to meddle with us. Why, I protest I cannot explain. If, as has been said, they have felt our arms, they who have been every where else successful, cannot but view the only power whose arms they have felt with feelings of warm resentment and with sentiments of mortified pride. But look at the map of Europe; there, where a great man (who, however, was always wrong on this subject) said he looked for France, and found nothing but a chasm. Look at that map now, and see nothing but France. It is in our power to measure her territory, to reckon her population, but it is scarcely within the grasp of any man's mind to measure the ambition of Buonaparté. Why, when all Europe bows down before him—why when he has subdued the whole continent, he should feel such great respect for us, I am at a loss to discover. If then it be true, as I have stated, that his ambition is of that immeasureable nature, there are abundant and obvious reasons why it must be progressive—reasons much stronger than any that could have been used under the power of the Bourbons. They were ambitious, but it was not so necessary for them to feed their subjects with the spoils and plunder of war; they had the attachment of a long established family applied to them; they had the effect and advantage of hereditary succession. But I see in the very situation and composition of the power of Buonaparté a physical necessity for him to go on in this barter with his subjects, and to promise to make them the masters of the world if they will consent to be his slaves. I see then, I repeat, this strong reason for his pursuing this system of policy. If that be the case, must not his most anxious looks be directed to Great Britain?—Every thing else is petty and contemptible compared with it.

Digitized by Google

Russia, if not in his power, is at least in his influence—Prussia is at his beck—Italy is his vassal—Holland is in his grasp—Spain at his nod—Turkey in his toils—Portugal at his foot;—when I see this, can I hesitate in stating my feelings, still less can I hesitate in giving a vote that shall put us upon our guard against the machinations and workings of such an ambition. But it has been said, that it is possible he may mean nothing more than rivalry of commerce. Happy, Sir, shall I be, if such an idea enter into his head at all, much more if it form part of his plans. But I confess I cannot see that it does. I mark him taking positions calculated to destroy our commerce, but I do not find him doing any thing for the mutual benefit of the trade of the two countries. I see him anxious to take possession of Louisiana, and to use the ports of St. Domingo to carry out West India and Jamaica trade. I can conceive a possible case, in which such positions might be taken as to force us to surrender our commerce without a stroke. An ignorant observer may see two armies, and may say there is no war, because there is no battle; yet one of them may make such movements as to compel the other to surrender without striking a blow.

Of the commercial talents of Buonaparté, I can be supposed to know but little; but bred in camps, it cannot be imagined that his commercial knowledge can be very great: and, indeed, if I am rightly informed, he is proceeding in the old plan of heavy duties and prohibitions. But he would go a shorter way to work with us. The old country has credit and capital, and commercial enterprise: and he may think if he can subjugate us, that he can carry them off to France like so many busts and marbles. But he would find himself mistaken; that credit would wither under the gripe of power; that capital would sink into the earth, if trodden upon by the foot of a despot. That commercial enterprise would, I believe, lose all its vigour in the presence of an arbitrary government. No, Sir, instead of putting his nation apprentice to commerce he has other ideas in his head. My humble apprehension is, that, though in the tablet and volume of his mind there may be some marginal note about cashiering the king of Etruria; yet, that the whole text is occupied with the destruction of this country. This is the first vision that breaks upon him through the gleam of the morning; this is his last prayer at night, to whatever Deity he addresses it, whether to Jupiter, or to Mahomet; to the goddess of battles, or to the goddess of Reason. But, Sir, the only consolation is, that he is a great philosopher and philanthropist. I believe this hyper-philanthropy has done more harm than ever it did good. He has discovered that we all belong to the Western family. Sir, I confess I feel a sentiment of deep indignation, when I hear (I take it from report) that this scrap of nonsense was uttered to one of the most enlightened of the human race. To this family party I do not wish to belong. He may invite persons, if he please, to dinner, and, like lord Peter, say that this tough crust is excellent mutton. He may toss a sceptre to the king of Etruria to play with, and keep a rod to scourge him in the corner; he may have thought at first his Cisalpine Republic a fine growing child, and may have found it a ricketty bantling; but I feel contempt for all this mockery. Let us, Sir, abstain from invective, only let us speak the truth. Why, Sir, what I have said is nothing but the truth. Let us be visiting acquaintance but I do implore him not to consider us as one of the family. Perhaps, Sir, it is unnecessary for me to state any more reasons for voting for this large peace establishment. All I desire is, not to have it understood that in stating my fears, I speak from a well informed judgment. On that account it is, that I say do not go to war, on that account it is, that I state my apprehensions as rational grounds for great vigilance, and for strong preparation. Sir, there are two other points pressed by several gentlemen, to which I beg leave to refer.—I mean the fitness of the persons in power, and the spirit of the people. The power of the country consists in its army, its navy, and its finance, in the talent and integrity of its ministers, and, above all, in the spirit of the people. Upon this second branch of the question, though I have said some things which may be considered as grateful to that party which may be denominated the war party, yet I fear I shall be compelled to state by-and-by some circumstances that may not be quite so agreeable to them. It is a matter of no importance to the House perhaps to know why I was absent on the two first days of the session. I am anxious to hear the part which men would take, and I do confess I never felt so much disgust at any circumstance, as

Digitized by Google

to find on the first day of the session, instead of an unanimous vote for vigilance and preparation, a call from some to give us back our places. The noble lord's friends may be divided into two classes; those who call for a change of ministers, and for war. And here I must say, Sir, for one, that I thank them for their frankness in stating what they have done, because their frankness is an antidote to the fury of their counsels. The noble lord says, we do not want to go to war: we only wish to have other persons in power; the noble lord deals with the ingenuousness of youth, as I say; with the inexperience of youth, according to others. But what should we get by this change? Would those persons he recommends have acted differently from the present ministers? Would they have gone to war for any of the events that have occurred since the peace? Would they have gone to war for the annexing of Piedmont to France? for the Cisalpine republic? for the invasion of Switzerland? No, for none of these. They would have done as ministers have done, but more vigorously; they would have shown more grumbling patience: they would have made wry faces; they would not have stood with their hands before them; no, but with their arms a-kimbo. What would they have got by this? Would they have obtained any thing more by all this grudging and wincing? Would such a mode of conduct have become the character and dignity of the country? Sir, it is not to be inferred, because the right hon. gentleman opposite me did none of these things, that he felt no indignation. I learn from his majesty's speech, every word of which I approve, that his ministers are determined not to be shut out of the continent. I say, Sir, I approve of the speech, because it satisfied me that a sense of wrong, and a resentment of injury, may live under moderate language. But these ministers, it seems, are the incapable gentlemen. Will gentlemen show us any act of base submission on their part? If they can; if they prove that they did any act with respect to Switzerland, and meanly retracted it afterwards, I will be the first to inveigh against them. But these gentlemen show us no such acts; they seem as if they considered the ministers, now the drudgery of signing the peace is done, as *functi officiis*, and as if they ought to go out; as if one was a mere goose-quill, and the other a stick of sealing wax, which are done with, and ought to be thrown under the table. We know that Touchstone says, as a good ground of quarrel, "That he don't like the cut of a certain courtier's beard." Perhaps this capricious dislike cannot be better exemplified than by the sentiment expressed in the well known epigram of Martial:—

"Non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare,
Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te!"

The English parody may be more applicable to these gentlemen:

"I do not like thee, Dr. Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell;
But this, I'm sure, I know full well,
I do not like thee, Dr. Fell."

It is fair, Sir, to say, that this English parody, so unfavourable to the doctor, proceeds from the mouth of a fair lady, who has privileges to like and dislike, which would ill become a member of this House. Sir, I contend that no solid reason has been offered to be urged against these ministers. How, I would ask, has the right hon. gentleman forfeited the confidence of the people? And why are we told that there is but one man alone that can save the country. But it seems, and I must frankly confess that I was utterly astonished when I heard such an assertion made use of, that his majesty's ministers assumed the reins of government at a most inviting period. Sir, I defy any man to show me a period of greater difficulty. The right hon. gentleman who, in the chair of this House, had so amply deserved and secured the respect of every member in it, could not but have quitted it with feelings of regret.—But the expeditions to the Baltic and to Egypt were prepared: true; yet was success certain? Was it not the act of chance, and the great skill shown by the noble admiral (Nelson) that brought the expedition to the Baltic to a favourable issue? Did the late ministers conceal their fears with respect to the expedition to Egypt? That it was most glorious in its event, and that the country ought to bind the brows of the meanest soldier engaged in it with laurels, I am ready to allow. But it cannot be denied, that, after the expedition had been off the coast in Italy, and was in Marmorice Bay, orders were sent to stop the expedition altogether. With respect to the negociations for peace, their predecessors knew that the present ministers would have to deal with men who, it might be supposed, would be glad of an

Digitized by Google

sion to retort the insolence of lord nville's letter. If the enemy had pero- that letter as their only answer to us, ey had said we will wait for experi- and the evidence of facts, with re- t to the new ministry: if they had restore that old Whig constitution h the former ministers have so im- d, we might have thought such con- trifling, and beneath them; but we l not have questioned its fairness. though his majesty's ministers must been prepared to expect humiliation; hey made peace, I will venture to on terms comparatively more advan- ous to the country than those that offered at Lisle. Of these ministers, I know also that they have not ved any of their predecessors' ssive acts. But this, some gentle- will contend, is a proof of their ness and unfitness. Never too, Sir, he Treasury interfere so little in the al election. This again may be ced by some as an instance of their acity. Nay, the North was left t to a member of the late adminis- n. When, therefore, gentlemen talk ure of Mr. Pitt's being the fittest n to save the country, they ought to lso the name of Mr. Dundas. But did these gentlemen expect from esent chancellor of the exchequer? eated him, when in the chair of this , with the respect he merited. He believe, Sir, over our present worthy er, the advantage in attitude; but ey expect that when he was minis- was to stand up and call Europe to ? Was he to send Mr. Colman, rjeant at arms, to the Baltic, and the Northern powers to the bar of ouse? Was he to see the powers of ny scrambling like members over nches, and say, gentlemen must eir places? Was he expected to s eye to the Tuscan gallery, and n, that strangers must withdraw? e to stand across the Rhine, and e Germans to the right, and the to the left? If he could have l these things, I, for one, should al- ote, that the Speaker of the House be appointed the minister of the r. But the right hon. gentleman e all that a reasonable man could him to do.

I confess, I wish to know what te himself thinks. I should be hear what his sentiments are of the call made for him, and loudly made too, in another place by a vigorous statesman. I well remember, Sir, and so do we all, the character he gave of the present administration. The justice of his character of the first lord of the admiralty no man can question. Of the accuracy of his judgment with respect to the present chancellor of the exchequer, it does not become us to entertain a doubt. The noble secretary of state was better qualified for the situation than any man in the country, with an exception made, I believe, in favour of my hon. friend near me (Mr. Fox). Does Mr. Pitt mean to retract that character? I cannot suppose he does. I must believe that he left, in his judgment, the best administration that could be left. I have heard some gentlemen attach to the present ministry the appellation of a mawkish mixture; but if I were to compare them to any thing, I should say, that Mr. Pitt, and the ex-secretary of war, acted as men fond of wine (which I certainly do not mean to impute to them as a fault), and drinking a bottle of tokay. Though you may take what appears to be the best, and leave only what seems to be the lees, yet if you only pour a bottle of good white wine upon them, you have as good a bottle of tokay as ever. Sir, I think the mixture as good and as wholesome to the constitution as it could have been. I am sure I hear with joy that it is not on account of ill health that the right hon. gentleman to whom I have alluded is absent. I repeat, Sir, when I see so many persons anxious about that gentleman, I am glad to hear that his health is re-established. But how, I would ask, can we, with any consistency, turn out the man who made the peace, to bring in the person who avowed his approbation of it? Sir, it is since that peace was made that gentlemen have voted a statue to Mr. Pitt; but whenever they erect that statue, let them cover it with laurels so as not to show its nose; yet still a piece of the olive must go with it, for he approved and supported the peace. Sir, I cannot persuade myself to think he is playing a double game, or that he has retracted the opinion he delivered in this House; but every thing should stand plain, every thing should be explicit. I have heard of one person playing two different games at chess, for two different persons at the same time; but I never heard of a person playing one of his hands against the other.

Digitized by Google

I suspect, therefore, there has been some mistake in the telegraphic communication; that the political Philidor's game has been misunderstood; that his friends have displaced a knight and a castle, when they should only have taken two pawns; that they have made an attempt to checkmate the king, when they had no instructions for doing it. Sir, I cannot forget the period when the august personage of the sovereign was held up as the only man who was against extending privileges to the Catholics in Ireland; and I cannot, therefore, brook the idea of calling that right hon. gentleman back to power, and forcing him upon the crown. I expected when I came into this House to hear much said against Buonaparté, but I had not the slightest expectation of hearing any thing against the prerogative of the crown. Mr. Pitt the only man to save the country! No single man can save the country. If a nation depends only upon one man, it cannot, and, I will add, it does not deserve to be saved; it can only be done by the parliament and the people. Sir, I say therefore I cannot believe that there is a back and a fore door to this Egerian grotto. We have all heard, I dare say, of a classical exhibition in this town, The Invisible Girl. Here, however, I hope we shall have no whisperings backwards and forwards, no speaking through tubes, no invisible agency. I hope too, that we shall have it declared, as it ought to be, that these opinions, which have been rumoured about, are unfounded. I shall now address a few words to those gentlemen who would hurry us into war; and here, Sir, I must say, that of all persons living, the ex-secretary of war is the last man who can consistently call out for war. He despised the warning voice of my hon. friend, he turned a deaf ear to his predictions that we should only consolidate and strengthen the power of France. His answers always were as if he should despise the power of France, could he but see Jacobinism destroyed. Is it not destroyed?

"Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear;
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcanian tiger—
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble—"

The right hon. gentleman's wishes are gratified; Jacobinism is killed and gone, and by whom? By him who can no longer be called the child and champion of Jacobinism — by Buonaparté. I remember to have heard Jacobinism compared to Antæus, who gained strength at every throw: but Buonaparté proceeded like Hercules; he gave it a true fraternal hug, and strangled it. Did the French annex Piedmont, did they enter Switzerland with the Rights of Man? Did they talk of those rights when Buonaparté told the people of Italy they were a set of dolts and drivellers, and were unfit to govern themselves? But now the right hon. gentleman seems in a greater fright than ever. He seems as if he had rather have the old ghost back again. Most whimsically he wants to unite all parties against France—

Black spirits and white,
Blue spirits and grey,

all are welcome to him. The moderate Jacobins he takes to his bosom: they were only misled by their feelings. The violent Jacobins he appeals to as men of proud spirits. He wishes to sing *Ca Ira* to them, and to head them all. Oh! had I, he sighs, but plenty of Jacobins here! But on what principle would they carry on the war? If they were able to curtail the power of Buonaparté, would not their views increase, and would they ever stop without making an example of the regicide republic? If they will speak out fairly, will they not confess this? Will the country, then, for such a purpose consent to turn out the present ministers? Sir, upon the spirit of the country I wish to say a few words. I have heard from one noble lord, with regret, what I hope was but a slip, that the spirit of the country is worn out. I think that noble lord must retract that idea. Sir, I certainly looked to the rejoicings at the peace as an unmanly and irrational exultation. Do I rebuke the people for rejoicing at the blessings of peace? No Sir, but for rejoicing without asking about the terms. Did they rejoice that we had gained Trinidad and Ceylon? Would two farthing candles have been burnt less had we not obtained them? No, Sir, if they had believed that they had been fighting for civilized order, morality, and religion; and if, believing this, they exulted in such a peace, then it proves, that their spirit was worn out. But I allude to this, in order that the enemy may not be led into a mistake upon the subject. Sir, one of the disadvantages attending the present administration is, that they will not turn, when they are attacked by the last admi-

Digitized by Google

nistration. They are hampered by the votes they gave for the war. But from the period of the allegations that it was a war for the Scheldt, I assert that it continued to be a war upon false pretences. The people were told that it was a war for religion and good order, and they found that peace was ready to be made at Lisle, without any reference to those causes. The right hon. gentleman says, what baseness, what meanness, while religion was in their mouths, to consent to steal a sugar island. It is true, Sir, though it comes a little extraordinarily from that man who was one of the cabinet ministers at the time of the negociation at Lisle. It should appear as if there had indeed been great discord in the cabinet: there never was greater, says the hon. gentleman. They acted not merely like men in a boat, rowing different ways, but like men in the boat of a balloon. Up the ex-secretary of war was ascending to the clouds, whilst Mr. Dundas was opening the valve and letting out the gas to descend; while one was throwing out ballast to mount to the most chivalrous heights, the other was attempting to let drop an anchor upon a West India island. Each of these ministers was suffered to have his favourite plan. The ex-secretary at war was allowed to nibble at the coast of France, the war secretary of state to make a descent upon a sugar island; and thus they went on till the letter from lord Grenville, that letter never to be forgotten, and I will add, never to be forgiven, made its appearance, and the people took a deep and settled disgust. Why did this not appear? And this, Sir, ought to be a lesson to us. The mouths of the people were shut and gagged, and the government were acting without knowing any thing of their circumstances. Sir, in such circumstances, the integrity of their minds was disgusted, and they were glad to get rid of the war at any rate. Upon this subject I have dwelt the more particularly, because I wish Buonaparté not to mistake the cause of the joy of the people. He should know, that if he commits any act of aggression against them, they are ready to enter singly into the contest, rather than suffer any attack upon their honour and their independence. I shall proceed no further. I perfectly agree with my hon. friend, that war ought to be avoided, though he does not agree with me on the means best calculated to produce that effect. From any opinion he may express, I never differ but with the greatest reluctance. For him my affection, my esteem, and my attachment are unbounded, and they will end only with my life. But I think an important lesson is to be learnt from the arrogance of Buonaparté. He says he is an instrument in the hands of Providence, an envoy of God: he says he is an instrument in the hands of Providence to restore Switzerland to happiness, and to elevate Italy to splendor and importance. Sir, I think he is an instrument in the hands of Providence to make the English love their constitution the better; to cling to it with more fondness; to hang round it with truer tenderness. Every man feels when he returns from France that he is coming from a dungeon to enjoy the light and life of British independence. Sir, whatever abuses exist, we shall still look with pride and pleasure upon the substantial blessings we still enjoy. I believe too, Sir, that he is an instrument in the hands of Providence, to make us more liberal in our political differences, and to render us determined with one hand and heart to oppose any aggressions that may be made upon us. If that aggression be made, my hon. friend will, I am sure, agree with me, that we ought to meet it with a spirit worthy of these islands; that we ought to meet it with a conviction of the truth of this assertion, that the country which has achieved such greatness, has no retreat in littleness; that if we could be content to abandon every thing, we should find no safety in poverty, no security in abject submission: finally, Sir, that we ought to meet it with a fixed determination to perish in the same grave with the honour and independence of the country.

Mr. *Canning* rose and said:—I feel, Sir, all the disadvantage under which I rise, to claim, for a short time, the attention of the committee, while they are yet warm with those impressions of admiration and delight which must have been excited in the minds of all who hear me, by the speech just delivered by my hon. friend. And were it not that that speech contained some allusions pointed personally to me, upon which I am particularly anxious to have as early an opportunity as possible of offering a few observations, I should certainly have better consulted my own interest, than to expose myself to a comparison by which

Digitized by Google

I must be so great a sufferer. This consolation, however, I have for the danger and difficulty of the situation in which I stand up to address you (and to me, with the feelings of personal kindness and regard which subsists between my hon. friend and myself, it is no small consolation), that if I am the first to encounter the hazard of so perilous a contrast, I am also the first who have the opportunity of expressing in words, those sentiments which I am persuaded I feel only in common with every man in the House, sentiments, not of satisfaction only, but of thankfulness for the part which my hon. friend has this day taken; a part which he has taken this day not for the first time; for it is surely in the recollection of the House, it is most certainly in the recollection of the country, at how many other periods of public embarrassment and anxiety in the course of the last eventful and tremendous years, my hon. friend, throwing aside all petty distinctions of party feeling, has come forward, often under circumstances of peculiar difficulty, often discouraged, always alone, as the champion of his country's rights and interests, and has rallied the hearts and spirits of the nation. At this time, indeed, such an exertion was peculiarly necessary. Never was a moment at which it was so desirable to recall the attention, and revive the courage of the House, and to present to them a true picture of their situation; of the dangers which impend over us, and of the exertions by which we must be prepared to meet them. I trust we shall now hear no more of those miserable systems, the object of which is, not to rouse us to ward off our ruin, but to reconcile us to submit to it. I trust we shall hear no more of those weak, fallacious, and degrading hopes which have been held out, not to inspirit, but to relax the exertions of the country; hopes founded on the calculation of what the chapter of accidents (as it is called) may produce, to favour our escape from a destruction, which we are taught that it is in vain to endeavour to resist; hopes founded sometimes on the possibility of Buonaparté's death, before his plans for our subjugation are brought to maturity; sometimes on the probability of changes in France; on the very magnitude of the French empire, which, it seems, affords a sure presage of its downfall (yes, of its downfall, perhaps some century hence, when we may long have made a subordinate part of it!); lastly, hopes of what unknown and unthought-of things time or chance may effect for us, and for the world! O! contemptible substitutes for rational precaution and manly readiness! Time and chance can do nothing for those who will do nothing for themselves! Providence itself (if it were not impious to assign limits to Omnipotence) can scarcely save a people who are not prepared to make a struggle for their own safety. And then, sir, the systems that have been recommended to us! recommended too from high authority, the authority of great abilities, and of popular and respectable names! "We have nothing to dread from France but a rivalry in commerce," says the hon. gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Fox). Look round, sir, on the state of the world, and can such an argument, even from such a man, need farther refutation? "We may be safe and happy, if we will but keep to ourselves," says an hon. friend of mine (Mr. Wilberforce), of whom I am sure I mean to speak with every profession of that respect and esteem which his character claims; "if we will abjure the continent; if shut up in our own island, safe within the surrounding impassable barrier of the sea, we confine our attention to objects immediately concerning our own comfort and happiness, and cultivate the arts of peace, unmolesting and unmolested." True, if unmolested; but these pictures of flowing felicity, these exhortations to inoffensive quiet, do they suit the times to which they are applied? or will not my hon. friend condescend to consider their practical possibility, before he shuts us out from any other chance of safety, but what is to be found in our own disposition to repose? Happy times, indeed, if they ever shall come, when we can realize these dreams of independent and unconnected security, when we can do without any intercourse with the corrupt nations of the continent, wretches whose territories are separated from each other by no other barriers than mountains and rivers, and who are consequently unfit for any intercourse with a pure insulated people like ourselves! Then shall the din of war never reach our tranquil shores! Then, instead of traversing the boisterous ocean, at the imminent hazard of their lives, our sailors shall be raised, for peaceful purposes, on the margins of duck-ponds, and the towing-paths of canals! But till this millennium does arrive, in God's

Digitized by Google

name, sir, let us look about us! Let us consider the state of the world as it is, not as we fancy it ought to be! Let us not seek to hide from our own eyes, or to diminish in the eyes of those who look to our deliberations for information, the real, imminent, and awful danger which threatens us, from the overgrown power, the insolent spirit, and still more, the implacable hatred of our natural rivals and enemies! Let us not amuse ourselves with vain notions, that our greatness and our happiness, as a nation, are capable of being separated. It is no such thing. The choice is not in our power. We have, as my hon. friend (Mr. Sheridan) has well observed, no refuge in littleness. We must maintain ourselves what we are, or cease to have a political existence worth preserving.

Such, Sir, is the view of our situation, which we are now called upon to take; such the tone and temper in which we must deliberate upon it, if we would deliberate to any purpose. And for recalling us to that tone, for shaming that dangerous and delusive mixture of whining despondency and false security which for the last two or three nights have been gradually gaining the ascendancy in our debates, my hon. friend has my thanks; he has rendered, in so doing, an essential service to his country. His speech, coming from the quarter from which it came, has done incalculable good. Let not my hon. friend suppose I grudge him the merit and the fame which belong to such a display of talents, when I add, that I lament that such a speech did not proceed from the mouth of a minister. Language like his, in the mouths of the administration at this crisis, would, in my opinion, have done more than fleets and armies to ward off the attack of a foreign enemy, and to animate and maintain the spirit and energy of the people; but from that quarter we have looked for such declarations in vain. And this leads me, Sir, to that part of my hon. friend's speech, in which, agreeing cordially as I do in the general sentiment which pervades the whole, I find myself under the necessity of differing from him. He has stated it as a matter of grave imputation against those who, like myself, are ready to vote for every measure of defence and preparation that the minister may think proper to propose, that while we concur in such measures, we do not withhold expressions of distrust or disapprobation of the general conduct and system of policy of those who propose them. It is argued by him and others as if there were something unfair and uncandid in not giving full confidence to the government at the moment when the particular subject of debate is one on which you agree with them. Now, Sir, I am, on the contrary, of the opinion which has been so well expressed and so well defended, by an hon. friend of mine (Mr. Cartwright) who spoke early in this debate, that it would be much more uncandid and unfair to conceal your general sentiments, at the moment when you are expressing partial approbation. In times of more regular and marshalled party, indeed, all such reserve or qualification is wholly unnecessary. It is understood without explanation, that the general combined sense of those who usually act together either influences their vote upon each particular question (I am not defending the system, I am only stating it); or that if upon any particular question that uniform influence is suspended, the suspension is limited to the occasion, and the general sentiment of partiality or distrust remains unimpaired. Such, Sir, was the case with the gentlemen who sit opposite to me (the old Opposition) during the whole of the last war; with this difference indeed, that I do not remember a single instance in which they happened to think the minister right, in which, even in the most perilous moments of external difficulty, or internal disquiet, they, even upon any one occasion suspended the inveteracy of their parliamentary opposition. But if, now the state of things is changed, if (whether to the advantage or detriment of the country I will not now discuss) the system of regular combination and marshalled parties is at an end; if individuals are called upon to decide upon measures as they arise, on their own individual and conscientious judgments; is it to be imputed as blame to men so judging, and acting conscientiously upon their opinions, that they limit the opinions which they give, to the occasion which calls for them? and that approving, for instance, of the armament, because they, in their view of the state of the world, think it indispensably necessary, but disapproving of the mode in which that necessity is stated, or rather is not stated to parliament and the country, they avow one of these sentiments as freely as the other? What would gentlemen have? Would they have us do

Digitized by Google

the converse of what we are doing, and disapprove of the armament itself, however necessary it may appear to us, because we cannot approve of the manner in which it has been proposed, or be satisfied with the grounds that have been laid for it? Would they have us do this? This was the conduct of the late Opposition. But I trust there is not a man with whom I have the honour to agree in opinion who would not reject with abhorrence any suggestion to act so dishonourable a part. No, Sir, we are not ready, whatever we may think of the counsels by which we have been brought into our present danger; whatever we may think of our chance of being extricated from it by the same counsels; we are not therefore ready to obstruct even those counsels in any thing confessedly directed to that end; we are not therefore ready to deliver our common country defenceless into the possession of an enemy.

But my hon. friend, taking under his powerful protection a ministry so hardly used as he describes the present ministry to be, complains that the unfairness lies in this; that while the approbation of their measures is specific, the expressions of distrust are vague and general; conveying no distinct accusation, pointed at no particular part of their conduct, and evincing only a fastidious dislike of their persons, not founded on any reasonable objection, nor supported by any intelligible charge. Sir, let others speak for themselves; for myself, I can most confidently say, and had my hon. friend happened to be present on any former night of debate, he would have borne me witness, that not one word personal to the right hon. gentleman below me (the chancellor of the exchequer) or his colleagues has escaped my lips; except indeed a few words on the last night of debate, expressive of the personal good will, and sincere and unaltered regard which I bear to one of them, the noble secretary of state (lord Hawkesbury); by which expressions I testified, I trust in no niggardly or reluctant manner, the satisfaction with which I heard from him (and I did hear with real satisfaction) the only speech that any of his majesty's ministers have yet made, in a tone at all suited to the circumstances of the times and of the country. But that I have arraigned the conduct, that I have pointed out what appeared to me to be gross blunders and mismanagement in the policy of the administration in respect to foreign affairs, that I have made no charge, without stating the grounds of it in the best way that I was able, I would appeal to my hon. friend himself, if he had been present in the House, and I do appeal to all those whom I may have had the honour of addressing on those occasions. My argument may have been good, or bad; convincing, or frivolous; my view of the points to which I took the liberty of calling the attention of the House on the first day of the session, may have been just or false; my charges of misconduct well made out, or proved to be unfounded: for this I am no otherwise responsible, than that I spoke nothing but what I was myself honestly persuaded was the truth; and what is more, every thing that I alleged remains to this hour unanswered. But that I did not indulge in random imputations I do most positively affirm. I stated, Sir (but let not the House suppose that I am about to wrong them by going through the particulars of my argument again), I stated my firm persuasion, that by their mismanagement of affairs at the court of Petersburg, ministers had detached the emperor of Russia from his alliance with Great Britain, and driven him out of the line of policy which he had laid down for himself, into the arms of France; that by refusing to interest themselves for the king of Sardinia, they had lost him Piedmont: that this very refusal had been that which above all other things perhaps had disgusted and alienated the emperor of Russia; and that they had therefore most ingeniously contrived, at one cast as it were, to throw away the dominions of one ally, and the friendship of another. I stated, that after having made these sacrifices, from fear of France, and in order to avoid any ground of difference with Buonaparté, they had all of a sudden absurdly and unnecessarily departed from this system of policy, such as it was, and by their rash, ill timed, ill-considered, and ill supported remonstrance in behalf of Switzerland, had committed the honour of this country with no other effect than to precipitate and aggravate the misfortunes of the people for whom they interfered; and that the honour of the country so committed had never been redeemed. I stated this, Sir, as the *primâ facie* case against the ministers, arising out of circumstances of public notoriety, and such as any man who takes the trouble to read the newspapers of the day could not avoid observing: and I chal-

Digitized by Google

lenged ministers, if they had any unknown circumstance to bring forward in contradiction, or in extenuation, to bring it forward in answer to what I said; but this challenge has never been accepted. Sir, from this silence I did infer, and do infer, that the case is nearly as I have stated it. And I now assert, that by this conduct ministers have not entitled themselves to my general confidence; however, I may not disapprove of particular measures which they or any other men in their situation could not hesitate to adopt in such a state of the world as is now unfortunately before us. But I do also assert still farther, that part, and no small part, of the disadvantageous circumstances of this country does arise from those instances of misconduct in ministers which I have stated; from their having forfeited great advantages of alliance, and having sought opportunities of disgrace; from having conceded without conciliating, and interfered without prevailing; from having adopted a system of insulated policy unwisely in the first instance, departed from it in the second instance (in regard to the affairs of Switzerland), without necessity, and without effect, and retreated to it again discomfited and dishonoured; from having by all these circumstances humbled the dignity, and lowered the tone of the country, and thereby weakened the best and surest defence which any country can have for its honour and security, the respect of its enemies and rivals. Sir, will my hon. friend after this recapitulation, again accuse me of having acted, or (as he seemed to state it) professed to act on a groundless, womanish, fanciful distaste and dislike of his majesty's ministers; or will he not fairly own that if I am founded in my premises, I am justified in the conclusion, I mean in withholding my general confidence from ministers, whom I conceive to have done so ill by the country; and who having contributed to reduce it to the situation in which it lies, do not appear to me to be the persons best calculated to exalt and to sustain it?

But a further charge against me by my hon. friend, and that which I was most anxious not to let pass without an immediate answer, is that of my having, in contrast with the demerits and defects of the present administration, brought forward the name of a right hon. gentleman now absent (Mr. Pitt) and drawn invidious distinctions and comparisons between him and his successor in the office of chancellor of the exchequer. Sir, my first answer to this charge is, that I have never done so. If my hon. friend (Mr. Sheridan) had been present on the first night of the sessions, when he states this to have been done by me, he would know that I had done no such thing. Neither on that night nor at any other time have I brought forward my right hon. friend's (Mr. Pitt's) name, nor even alluded to his existence; except when I have heard, as on the first night of the session I certainly did hear from the hon. gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Fox) a direct and violent attack on the whole conduct and principles of his administration. Then indeed I did feel it impossible to be silent. I did feel that I should have been the most insensible and most ungrateful of mankind, if (amidst the silence of others much better capable of undertaking his defence) I had not done the little that was in my power to repel an attack at once so unqualified and so unjust. But even the reply which this attack provokes from me, my hon. friend (from misrepresentations made to him I am sure, not from intention,) has entirely misrepresented. He represents me to have averred among other things, that the event of the battle off Copenhagen, and that of the campaign in Egypt, were certain beforehand. Sir, I hope I need hardly argue, that I could not advance such an absurdity. What I did say was this: in answer to an assertion often made, and too often suffered to go uncontradicted, that the state in which the late administration left the country, was altogether not only deplorable but hopeless; I did take the liberty to point out some hopes and chances, and facilities, which they bequeathed to their successors; and I mentioned particularly the armament for the Baltic, and the expedition to Egypt, not as undertaking certain of success but as undertakings, which the eventual success, had justified, and with regard to which the new administration had this peculiar and remarkable advantage, that if they had both, or either of them failed, they (the new administration) would not have been responsible for the failure. The fruits of success were theirs; but not theirs the responsibility for failure. The very terms of this proposition show that I did not, and could not, state success as certain, and failure as impossible. But I did and do state it as a singular facility and good fortune, which probably never attended the outset

Digitized by Google

of any former administration, that they inherited from their predecessors in office, all their chances of credit and advantage, while they stood clear of any discredit from reverse and disappointment. I did and do state this circumstance as a complete answer to all the stuff that we have heard about sacrifice in taking office on the one hand, and all the unjust aspersions about flying from difficulty and responsibility on the other. If in this respect the former ministry cannot be justified without detracting something from the exaggerated panegyrics upon their successors, that is not my fault. I did not start the topic; but as often as it is started in my presence, I shall be ready to meet it precisely on the same ground. It is thus only, I say, Sir, in pure defence alone against charges directly brought against him, that I have ever even alluded to my right hon. friend. As to bringing forward his name in the way and with the view imputed to me by my hon. friend on the other side of the House, for the purpose of suggesting him back into office, that I confidently affirm I never have done, nor any thing like it; not because I am hypocrite enough to deny or disguise (when challenged to speak my mind) the wish which I entertain in common, as I verily believe, with the greatest part of the public; or my opinion of the absolute necessity of his being where he ought to be; of his filling again that situation which he alone is competent to fill with advantage to the country. I do not pretend to indifference in this point; but I feel and acknowledge that the very sentiments of personal attachment and affection which bind me to him make me an unfit person from whom the declaration of such an opinion should come uncalled for. My testimony could add nothing to the public sense of his merits; but the uncalled-for obtrusion of it might subject me to imputations of personal views and interest, vulgar imputations to be sure, and such as I am truly sorry my hon. friend over the way, or my hon. friend the attorney-general, should have allowed himself on a former night to adopt and sanction; but such as, though I have something within me (be it pride or conscience) that enables me to treat them with disdain, neither I nor any man in his senses would wilfully go out of his way to incur. I say this to convince my hon. friend, not only that I did not, but that I could not, consistently with these feelings, for the sincerity of which I am sure he will give me credit, originate any such suggestion as he has imputed to me.

But if I am pushed to the wall, and forced to speak my opinion, I have no disguise nor reservation; I do think that this is a time when the administration of the government ought to be in the ablest and fittest hands; I do not think the hands in which it is now placed answer to that description; I do not pretend to conceal in what quarter I think that fitness most eminently resides; I do not subscribe to the doctrines which have been advanced, that in times like the present the fitness of individuals for their political situation is no part of the consideration to which a member of parliament may fairly turn his attention. I know not a more solemn or important duty that a member of parliament can have to discharge than by giving at fit seasons, a free opinion upon the character and qualities of public men. Away with the cant of "measures, not men!" the idle supposition that it is the harness and not the horses that draw the chariot along! No, Sir, if the comparison must be made, if the distinction must be taken, men are every thing, measures comparatively nothing. I speak, Sir, of times of difficulty and danger; of times when systems are shaken, when precedents and general rules of conduct fail. Then it is, that not to this or that measure, however prudently devised, however blameless in execution, but to the energy and character of individuals, a state must be indebted for its salvation. Then it is that kingdoms rise or fall in proportion as they are upheld, not by well-meant endeavours (laudable though they may be), but by commanding, over-awing talents; by able men. And what is the nature of the times in which we live? Look at France, and see what we have to cope with, and consider what has made her what she is? A man. You will tell me that she was great, and powerful, and formidable, before the date of Buonaparté's government; that he found in her great physical and moral resources; that he had but to turn them to account. True, and he did so. Compare the situation in which he found France with that to which he has raised her. I am no panegyrist of Buonaparté; but I cannot shut my eyes to the superiority of his talents, to the amazing ascendant of his genius. Tell me not of his measures, and his policy. It is his genius, his cha-

Digitized by Google

racter, that keeps the world in awe. Sir, to meet, to check, to curb, to stand up against him, we want arms of the same kind. I am far from objecting to the large military establishments which are proposed to you. I vote for them with all my heart. But for the purpose of coping with Buonaparté, one great commanding spirit is worth them all. This is my undisguised opinion. But when I state this opinion thus undisguisedly, is my right hon. friend to be implicated in a charge of prompting what I say? Sir, I wish not to speak of myself; but I must say thus much, we are both above such a suspicion. Such, however, is the charge brought against him, accompanied and aggravated by another not less disgraceful to him, of guiding at a distance, in secresy and irresponsibility, the measures of the government, and thus playing one part of his friends against the other. Of all the imputations to which that right hon. gentleman could be subjected, I confess I did think that of intrigue and cabal the least likely to be preferred against him by any man who has witnessed his public conduct; and least of all, perhaps, by my hon. friend opposite to me, who is a better judge of men than to believe what he says, and whose heart, I am sure, disclaims the accusation at the moment that he is making it. Is there any thing in the life of that right hon. gentleman, is there any thing in the last years of his life, to justify such an accusation? No, Sir. Never did young ambition, just struggling into public notice, and aiming at popular favour, labour with half so much earnestness to court reputation, and to conciliate adherents, as my right hon. friend has laboured, since his retreat from office, not to attract but to repel, not to increase the number of his followers, but to dissolve attachment and to transfer support. And if, whatever have been his endeavours to insulate and individualize himself in political life, he has not been able to succeed wholly even with those who would sacrifice to his wishes every thing but their attachment to him; if with the public he has succeeded not at all, what is the inference? what, but that, retreat and withdraw as much as he will, he must not hope to efface the memory of his past services from the gratitude of his country; he cannot withdraw himself from the following of a nation; he must endure the attachment of a people whom he has saved. For him, therefore, I disdain to answer such a charge as has been made against him. For myself I may be allowed to say, that, for this one plain reason, if for no other, I cannot very fairly allow him to be held answerable for the sentiments which I have uttered, because till the moment in which I uttered them I was myself wholly unconscious of any intention to make any such declaration as I have made: it has been extorted from me. If my right hon. friend had been sitting in his place here beside me, he would have been as unprepared to hear, as I was to pronounce it. But had he been sitting here, called upon as I have been, I would not the less have declared myself as I have done, however the fear of hurting his delicacy might have awed and constrained me. But, present or absent, he is no party to what I say.—Thus much, Sir, for that part of the charge in which I am coupled with my right hon. friend. The other, that of guiding the administration, it is not for me to answer: but it is one no less grave and serious in itself, and requires a no less distinct and peremptory refutation. And I do trust that his majesty's ministers will feel the strongest anxiety to remove an imputation equally discreditable to him and to themselves. I am confident they will not suffer this night to pass over, without disclaiming in the most unequivocal terms any secret guidance, any overruling influence, such as has been, groundlessly I am sure, insinuated against them and him; such as not only his, and their characters, but the constitution of the country itself, is deeply interested in their disclaiming. For, if on the part of my right hon. friend, I think myself entitled to claim that he shall not be loaded with responsibility where he has not power, I would claim no less strenuously on behalf of my country, that it should not be governed, nor held to be governed, by power, without constitutional responsibility. Sir, this is all that I think it necessary to trouble you with upon those points in my hon. friend's speech, which occasioned my rising to address you. I shall give my vote this night in favour of large military establishments; but I need not detain you with any further statement of the reasons by which that vote is determined.

Mr. *Wilberforce* rose to explain some parts of his speech which had been misrepresented. He never had said, that we

Digitized by Google

should utterly disregard the continent; but that we should be cautious of being too forward in the affairs of the continent, in which experience had shown that we had generally been too forward to engage, and too obstinate to continue. He had said that we ought to improve our agriculture, encourage our manufactures, our fisheries, and the internal sources of prosperity. He thought that we should endeavour to gain the affection of the people, to cultivate the popular sentiment, to revive the national spirit, to repair what had become defective in any parts of the constitution; and, as commerce on the one hand tended to liberalize, so on the other it tended to induce a selfish character, that we ought to endeavour to correct that tendency, particularly when it might injure the purity of the constitution. Adverting to the immediate question, he was much more inclined to agree to an increase of the navy than the army, from the nature of the different services. He alluded to Mr. Pitt's disinterested support of the present ministers — a conduct which stamped the magnanimity of his character; and he contrasted that conduct with the behaviour of those who pretended to support the present ministry, and who did it with so ill a grace. He said they seemed to "damn with faint praise." For his part he thought, in a crisis like this, it was proper to throw away all party connexion, and to give ministers a disinterested support. He was for considering measures and not men, rather than for being guided by that sort of partiality for men, which had been mentioned.

Mr. *Fox* said;—At so late an hour, when the attention of the House is so much exhausted, though they must have been equally delighted, by what they lately heard from my hon. friend, I should not have offered myself, were it not for the turn the debate has taken; and I therefore feel it a duty I owe, not only to myself, but to my constituents and my country, to say a few words. The hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Canning) has attempted to answer some part of what I said on a former occasion, by totally misrepresenting it; and that part of it which he does not misrepresent, he does not attempt to answer at all. Now, this is rather wonderful, considering that the hon. gentleman is not deficient in abilities, and certainly not in readiness. He need not, therefore, have waited for newspaper misstatements, or any other species of assistance, since he might have replied on the spot to that which he censures. He begins with saying, that the power of France is now "confessed" by me. "Confessed" by me! And was it necessary that the hon. gentleman should now for the first time find out that this was confessed? Did the hon. gentleman never hear me most distinctly charge it upon his friends, the late ministry, that, by their misconduct, they contributed so much to the aggrandizement of France? But he complains that I have not proposed a remedy for the evil that is confessed. But has the hon. gentleman himself proposed any remedy? Some say, and that but few, "go to war." The hon. gentleman does not say so. Yet what remedy has been proposed, except the high tone and fine words in which so much reliance seems to be placed, I have not yet heard. It is not said that the conduct of France to Switzerland, in the German indemnities, and other articles of complaint against France, are singly grounds of a new war, nor is it said that taken together they amount to a cause of war; for if they do, in the opinion of the hon. gentleman, why does he not state it as a specific charge against ministers, that they do not advise his majesty to declare war? If he does not think we should go to war, where do he and I differ but in the efficacy of fine words, and high tone? If he does think war the remedy, I am ready to join again with him on that ground of argument. But let him speak out. One hon. gentleman said, that if there was a person in this country, the agent of France, he could not do better than by holding such and such language. He seemed to say, that he might have supposed that those who held that languge must be the agents of France, if he did not find that language used by a gentleman, whom he cannot suspect of being an agent of France. The speech of that hon. gentleman I certainly did very much approve. Indeed I am under considerable obligation to that gentleman for being in some sort my compurgator in this charge of being an agent of France, and on this account the satisfaction his speech afforded, may be thought not altogether disinterested. I wish gentlemen would speak out. Do they believe that I stand up here as the agent of France? Do they think me actuated by hatred against my own country, or bribed to betray its interests? I have been in Paris lately, on pursuits foreign to

Digitized by Google

House, though much connected with my ite occupations. Would it be strange, : they, if going to Paris to read Ba- 's dispatches, and find out who were pensioners of France in Charles and s's reign, I had contrived to get a on for myself! If any body think so ll not take the trouble to undeceive ; but if they do so, it is a more ratio- sort of charge than the common-place ach, that I am the apologist of e! That kind of topic may do very or those who use it, the places where sed, and those it is intended to please; [should expect something better The apologist of France! And is is the reproach that is used in every he grounds of which are at all dis- ? If this be a war not only with e, but with Russia (perhaps that e a case in which, in a former war, receive a bribe!) those who think ther countries are not so much in rong as to justify a war, must lay ccount with being exposed to the ied charge of being the apologist of es. Differing from those who are ge establishments, I hope it will not pected that I should clear myself of gn to invite the French to invade ountry. I remember, that a near ry respectable relation of mine, the of Richmond, was accused, during merican war, of having it as a fa- object to procure the French to Sussex. Proceeding in the way of ation, his grace had an opportunity ving the charge on oath, and mak- affidavit that it was no favourite his that the French should invade . Now, as I have no opportunity aring that I do not intend to invite nch to invade this country, I hope aen will take it on my word. To o the question of the establishment army, it may be considered, whe- small or a great army be best suited defence of the country. I find it at, as formerly, alliances super- ne necessity of large establishments, aving no alliances, we should have army. Now, I believe the argument er times to have been directly the . It was because we had connexions e continent, and not for our own , that standing armies were pro- and this the preamble of every bill, since king William's reign, It would have roused the pride gnation of our ancestors, if they had been told that a large standing army was necessary for their internal defence. No, it was on account of our continental alliances that a standing army was justified. Not thinking the policy of our ancestors wrong in regard to continental affairs, I cannot altogether disapprove a standing army—an object certainly of great jealousy. But how does the argument apply? What are the most glorious wars in which this country has been engaged for the last century? They are those that are called the War of Succession, and the Seven Years war. Now, it is certain, that previous to these wars, our peace establishment was lower than the peace establishments previous to other wars in which we were less successful. The peace establishment, after the peace of Utrecht, a period of the longest cessation of war, was likewise very low. But it may be said, that the establishments of France were even proportionably low. If relative proportion be made the rule, it will not be easy to apply it satisfactorily. The truth is, that the power of France is different in its principle, from the power of Great Britain, and hence arises a necessary variation in the principle of our offensive and defensive war. It is not a ratio of 30, or 40, or 60,000, men, to any given number in France, that will enable us to judge when our establishment is adequate. An hon. gentleman alluded to the establishment in 1763 and in 1783; of the latter, which out of doors was styled a scandalously low establishment, I, as one of the advisers of it, am willing to take the responsibility. It was mentioned by the secretary at war, that then we had not Holland against us. But in fact, at the time of that establishment, Holland was as much in the hands of France as she is now. In effect, France, who had her colonies, made the peace for her, and under the influence of France, Holland remained till the events of 1787 overthrew it. We now come to the power of France, and really I am doubtful whether those who speak of that power in the most exaggerated terms, are not, in fact, speaking what is more agreeable and more useful to the French government, than those who talk of that power with greater moderation. Regardless of the certain misrepresentation to which I shall be subject, and the probable charge of maintaining paradoxes, I will maintain, that the government of France is less in a situation than formerly to make any attempt upon

Digitized by Google

this country; if it be by invasions that we are to be menaced, and if it be against invasion that high establishment is intended. If we consider the state of the French navy, compared with our own, we must see that for this species of attack there cannot, for several years at least, be any well-founded alarm.—The acquisition of Switzerland has been insisted upon as showing a hostile spirit. But is this the first time we knew that the government of France, past, as well as present, were actuated by ambition? But it is admitted, that the conduct of France to Switzerland, which touches the feelings of all so much, and of which no man can entertain a stronger sense than I do, does not form an aggression against this country. Why, then, should it be an argument for adding 20 or 30,000 men to our establishment? How is the danger of our situation, which my hon. friend, as well as others, laboured by admirable powers of declamation so much to exaggerate, increased by that measure? Is 20,000 men added to our expenses, a remedy against the French attack on Switzerland? Is men's talking bravely then to be the remedy? Brave words are easily spoken, and prove no courage. "He did speak *prave* words in the *preach*," says, captain Fluellen, in Henry the 5th, of Pistol, who imposed upon the honest Welchman with fine words. But instead of augmenting our army now, might not, upon the old foundation of our army, as many more troops be added in a short space as any emergency might require? Is the danger of invasion to be feared? In 1779 and 1780, I was apprehensive of invasion, because the superiority by sea being then doubtful, the French having landed an army, might have been able to send reinforcements, and compel us to sustain a war upon English ground, though I have no doubt that the spirit and courage of the country might have finally prevailed. But now our superiority by sea is unquestionable, and must so continue for at least some time. The French then must evade our fleet. They might, perhaps, succeed in landing an army, and the possession of Belgium certainly gives new facilities. But then, if an army were landed, all succour would be cut off, and the whole must be either taken or destroyed. When I hear it said, that we known not what so desperate a people may do; in the first place, I do not see that the French do such desperate things. In all the last war, when they may be supposed as desperate as they ever were, they never did think seriously of an invasion. The expedition to Egypt was not a desperate enterprise, for till the glorious victory of Nelson, the French thought they could cope with us in the Mediterranean. Some may say, let the French come, we are ready to meet them. Now, I confess I neither wish the French had come, nor that they would come; though I have not a doubt that the spirit and energy of the nation would quickly have decided the fate of the invaders. They would do mischief; but surely ten millions of men attached to the constitution, and all are so, would have shown that whatever mischief they might do, they could not subject us. Those who choose to exaggerate the courage, strength, force, genius, or desperation of the French, cannot think there is any danger that we should finally be subjected by any force the French could steal over to this country. Do they really believe, that there is any danger of seeing the tri-coloured flag flying on the Tower of London? Is it possible that a people so numerous, however dastardly, (and I think the people of England as brave as any nation in the world) could be subdued by 40,000 men —the greatest number that could be conveyed over to this country in the relative state of the navies of France and England? It is ridiculous to think so, if any thing connected with so serious a subject can be thought ridiculous. Indeed, those who paint our situation and our prospects in the most gloomy colours do not want good humour enough to enliven the canvass with many ludicrous touches; so that if they describe us as ruined, it is in the temper of the man in the play, who is told "if you are an undone man, you really are the merriest undone man in Christendom." But an invasion, though it would neither destroy our laws, our government, nor our constitution, might do serious mischief, I confess. It would perhaps destroy or suspend that credit and that wealth, of which some gentlemen speak so contemptuously, in comparison of guns and bayonets. But if we are not vulnerable by invasion of the soil of Great Britain, there are vulnerable points in our situation. Are we not vulnerable through our finances? Might not the French think that, to harass this country by expensive establishments; to divert in useless and cumbrous forces, the re-

Digitized by Google

sources that might be employed in accelerating the extinction of the national debt, was no very unsuccessful way of carrying on war with us? It was lately said, that the greatest part of the population of Ireland was disaffected; but, without ascribing great effects to the Union, nay, unless we suppose the government outrageously bad, the people of Ireland must, in a few years, be much less disaffected than they now are. Thus, a few years of peace and moderate establishment would enable us to throw off a considerable part of that debt which in war was called the best ally of France; while peace would equally tend to fortify us in Ireland—a point where it is evident we now are vulnerable. Is not France, then, much more likely to direct her efforts against our finances than to invasion, in which, at any time, there is so little prospect of success, and in which, for some time, there can be no prospect of success at all? The funds by the late war, fell from 97 to 47; 50 per cent! They again have risen to 67; but, supposing a new war to take place, what would be the consequence of the funds losing 50, or even 30 per cent on the price of 67? Instead, however, of such a loss, if peace is preserved, and our resources, increased by economy, applied to the extinction of the public debt, I am almost sure that the funds would again rise to 97.—I have already remarked, that the strength of France and England is different; their offensive and defensive systems are different; the credit of this country is a main spring of its greatness and of its wealth. In France there was no great deal of credit before the Revolution, but the utter destruction of it by the war, and the events of the war though it spread much misery through France, did not unnerve that country. It rather contributed to swell the armies of the republic; and to add to the conquests they made. In England, the destruction of credit, though it would not be attended with the loss of the independence of the country (for we might still possess men and arms) yet it would spread infinite misery over the land. Let us therefore ward off from our finances and from our credit every danger; because though not fatal to our existence their overthrow would be fatal to our well-being. I confess that I never could enter so far into the sentiment, common in ancient times, of being able to love my country, independently of loving my countrymen, and I should not be glad to see us reduced to a state of things, in which the country alone should be preserved, and every means of happiness and comfort finally torn from its inhabitants. High establishments would form no security against the danger which has been held out to us. Wise economy is the resource from which we shall draw the means of defending ourselves against every danger. If we have 25,000 men less, we shall in return in a short time have 25,000,000*l.* more to apply to our defence and to enable us to repel any aggression.—Hitherto I have argued the question upon the ground that war was an event which we might expect in no very distant period. But I do not think that we are obliged to anticipate a speedy war. Again, at the hazard of misrepresentation I must declare it to be my opinion, that it is for the interest of the French nation and of the French government, and that it is their wish to cultivate peace, and that with good management, without any particle of submission, peace may be preserved. Though this be my opinion, I would not risk one iota of the public safety and interest on that which must be very vague and loose speculation. I have shown, however, that in regard to your finances, you would by economical establishments, fortify your credit, and enlarge your resources for any future exigency.—The question of the navy establishment has been mixed with the consideration of the army; and I think strangely. It seems to be taken as a matter of course, that you must have a large army, because you have 50,000 seamen. Now, it appears to me, that the conclusion should be directly the reverse. It operates two ways. You need employ fewer soldiers for your defence, because you have augmented your navy: and the additional expense by sea, is an argument for additional economy in the establishment of your land forces. There is a way, too, in which a large army establishment may be raised; and it is hitherto unnoticed. Is there no constitutional consideration arising from a large standing army? A standing army without consent of parliament, is illegal; with the approbation of parliament, it may still be dangerous. I do not mean to say that the officers of the army are not friends to the constitution of their country. But consider the source of influence which the

Digitized by Google

army affords; there is scarcely a gentleman in this House, who by himself, or relation, has not some one to look to in the army. I do not say, that this influence is pushed to carry a particular vote; but its effects in procuring a general support to the measures of administration is obvious. I would not, however exclude officers of the army from sitting in parliament; that would render the evil worse, because it would too much separate the characters of soldier and citizen. How is an army to be viewed, as soldiers distinct, or as citizens forming a part of the country? In the one case, they may have no sympathies with the people; in the other, they may, in the exercise of civil privileges, give a dangerous preponderance in an election, for instance, to any side they might espouse: but in fact they are to many purposes already, and wisely so, put under a control different from their fellow subjects. To these remarks, however, the naval establishment is not subject; and for that reason I agree with an hon. gentleman, that the naval establishment is on that account less liable to objection, while it affords us all the security we can have against the danger, magnified as it has been.—There is another view of the subject which, though not avowed, is perhaps entertained by some. It may be thought right to have a large establishment in order to go to war immediately, or very soon; certainly, if we are to go to war in a month or two, it would be idle to reduce our establishments. I can judge of ministers only from their words and their actions. The chancellor of the exchequer, if I rightly understood, said a few nights ago, that he saw no danger to the peace of Europe at present; and the secretary at war to day spoke out distinctly and candidly. He said it was our business to be armed against any danger. He and I differ as to the extent to which we should be armed; but he says, thatwe should provoke no war, that we should commit no aggression, that we should execute the treaty of Amiens, and that we should repel any insult or aggression with firmness and dignity. This is my creed. Is it probable then, that the aggression may come from France? An hon. general gave a very ugly reason why the peace should be agreeable to the late secretary at war, because the spirit of the country was become warlike; whereas, if the war had continued, the table would have been loaded with petitions against it. This is rather a suspicious argument, because it seems to say, that we have only got rid of the bad war which could not be continued in order to get another more acceptable. My hon. friend himself, I am sure, rejoices in the peace, and does not wish to begin the war on a new score. But in fact every thing convinces me more and more that the people are decidedly for peace. Gentlemen, however brave and warlike in their language, always conclude with saying, "nevertheless I am for peace!" They naturally wish to stand well with their constituents, and they do not fail to utter a sentiment which they know will be agreeable to them. Much has been said of the tone we ought to assume, but what is the object to which all this tends? My hon. friend with much humour, alluded to those who, with their arms a-kimboo would sit stock-still, notwithstanding all their complaints against France. Now, whether my hon. friend could sit stock-still, with his arms a-kimboo, I cannot tell; he does little more than leave the tongue at liberty, and recommends you to acquiesce in peace after a bluster at proceedings with which we are not to interfere. It has been said, indeed, that a remonstrance has been presented respecting the attack on Switzerland. I know not whether in the precise circumstances or manner of that remonstrance it was proper, though I have no reason to believe that it was not. Remonstrances may be presented in cases where no war is deemed expedient, even if the remonstrance be ineffectual. This happened in the case of Corsica in 1769. As to philippics, sure we must have philippics to keep up the national spirit. I am very willing that they be taken into account as provision for our security, but I hope that 30,000 men will, in lieu of them, be deducted from our establishments. But if we are to have the 30,000 men into the bargain, I do not see what benefit they will produce. If danger really did appear, if invasion actually were effected, every feeling would be absorbed in those of repelling the invader, from the sovereign motive of self defence; so that all the declamation which was to nourish the spirit of the nation, would be fruitless and unnecessary.—Much had been said about men and measures: if he, who had always opposed the measures of the late administration, should say he hesitated to support the present ministers because they had always approved of the conduct of the last, he should speak a language, which,

Digitized by Google

whether right or wrong, would at least be intelligible. But he could not see on what ground the gentleman near him, should object to a ministry who had always supported the measures they pretended to have admired. If the noble earl (Temple) and his friends had any advice to give to the crown, why did they not move an address to his majesty? But they had no advice to give—nothing to propose—and this was what distinguished an honourable party from an interested faction. They, were satisfied with the measures of ministers, but they wanted their places. The late chancellor of the exchequer was called for by the noble lord and his friends; but he had gone out, it seemed, on the Catholic question. If that was the cause of his going out, how could he come in now? Their opinion of the present ministers was spoken plainly enough. It was not exactly what it had been described by the honourable gentleman opposite. They did not

"mn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
"d, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer.

neirs was certainly no praise at all; and, certainly, nothing like civility; but, as sneers, they were abundant enough. ith regard to the views of Buonaparté, saw no reason why, having gained great litary glory, his ambition might not now luce him to turn his attention to the provement of the commerce of his intry. There was nothing improbable, thing unnatural in this. Years of peace uld enable this country to renew the r with increased means, but would not l, in the same proportion, to the reurces of France.

Mr. *Windham* said, he felt it his duty to ke some observations on the speeches of ntlemen who had delivered themselves ly in the debate; but some parts of the ech of the hon. member who spoke first deserved animadversion. That ntleman was certainly, in one respect, e to his principle. He always had enained the same earnest desire for a ce with the French republic. He was r the apologist of their ambition and t. His language ever since the comncement of their revolution had been of an apologist, often of an eulogist. He exhausted volumes of encomiums on nat wonderful and stupendous fabric uman wisdom:" and up to this day he tinued to look on it with affection. the French enormities he keeps out of sight. Now and then, perhaps, they are lamented, but not censured and exposed. At all times, as on this night, he endeavours to lead away the feelings of his countrymen from their abhorrence of French conduct and French principles. He treats the new system as an old government; and seeks out similar instances of perfidy and oppression in the old government. Look at old times, says he—meaning that the morals of the republic had not been worse than those of the monarchy. But those who had seen them would best judge. These things had operated a wonderful change on his mind! They had operated that surprising love of peace which he did not feel before. On former occasions, particularly in 1787, what was his language? Did he not say that the treaty would stand in the way of future wars, and that was one among other reasons for his opposing it? And what was? Why, to interfere with the balance of power in Europe But what was that but to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries? Now, the whole colour of his mind was changed by the revolution. Before that, his sentiments were English—he was English to the backbone. Now, the hon. gentleman wishes to make it out that we are in no danger. He finds out, that, by the diminution of her navy, France has much less power to hurt us; but the extent of the sea-coast, from the Texel to the Mediterranean, with all her other means, made a very different appearance. Reasons as good might have been advanced against her successes in other countries. We know something of her activity. What was the case with the battle of Marengo? Had general Melas not listened to the idea of the impracticability of passing the Alps, he might have stopped the consular march. When the news came over, that the Austrian general felt himself quite safe and sound, there was reason to fear for his real state. The hon. gentleman may know, that in the last war, those in military stations were generally the least afraid of a bold and daring enterprise of the enemy, who had the least means of resisting them in such cases. They were most desirous of guarding every point, who knew by their own experience what talents and boldness might accomplish. The hon. gentleman had said, that though an invasion would be productive of much mischief, it would stop short of subjugation. But the

Digitized by Google

whole question was, what, in case of invasion, would be the best means of defending the country—the troops or the money? Twenty thousand men were far better than any equivalent sum of money in our pockets for such a purpose. Should the hon. gentleman's opinion of the pacific disposition fail him, then another part of his argument comes in question—that of the finances. But what was this but the same sort of comparative question? He had kept out of sight the other great dangers arising from the French revolution, as if that of an invasion was the only one. We ought to consider what was the French navy, now that it consisted not only of the French, but Spanish, Dutch, and other ships; and what were the French means of commerce; and how they could make their military power bear upon matters of trade. So far as to troops and money compared. Then, as to the comparison the hon. gentleman made between our establishments after former pacifications. No inference was to be drawn from an antecedent state, as no times resembled these. He had said that, starting with low establishments, we had obtained splendid successes. But, does it follow, that a higher establishment would prevent similar success? At the commencement of the Seven Years war, we had very ill success—the consequence of that fallen state we were placed in by a low peace establishment. The hon. gentleman mentioned Ireland. Why, had we not had there two invasions? And was not that the most formidable which even disembarked her troops, that of Bantry Bay? Fleets may get across, then, and may land them in spite of our navy. Every measure was taken in France to promote conquest and hostility. This wonderful representative government, that was to give such liberty to all the world, has lately made another compulsory military conscription. He did not hear these matters from such high authority as the hon. gentleman; but he heard from very judicious, intelligent, and correct persons, who had been in France, that the idea of liberty had long been treated by all sober people as a government not fit for them; and the only consolation they had in view was, the grand consolidation of the grand empire of the world, by humbling or destroying us under their feet. There was a speech delivered in the course of the debate by an hon. gentleman (Mr. Sheridan), of which he must speak in terms of very high praise, excepting one part of it; which, however, was not such as to make him alter his opinion of it as a whole. He did not like to speak of persons instead of measures and principles: but it was a custom to say of him, that he wished to plunge the nation into a war. It was utterly incorrect and unfounded. When asked, what he would advise to the House and to ministers, he had distinctly marked out the line. It was, not to give up any thing which success or accident might have thrown in our hands, and that some places had been imprudently parted with already. He would not give an opinion grounded upon imperfect evidence. Therefore, that we should have done well in making war at present, he could not take upon him to say. The hon. gentleman had said that French principles were the object of war with him (Mr. W.) and his friends. Now, his objection was to French principles and French power. His sentiments were, that their principles led to power. Another paltry expedient was, attributing to him an attachment to the Bourbons. He hated French power under any family; but he thought peace safer under them, than under the consul. Their temple of liberty was transformed into the temple of Mars. All the decoration and scrolls, &c. were destroyed, and fire and destruction went forth to consume the earth. The whole question lay in this—money or money's worth. He preferred the latter.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, it had been asked, whether there was any thing in the state of the country at this time which so peculiarly distinguished it from other situations of the country, as to render the present establishment necessary? He should not act fairly, if he said that any circumstances were known to his majesty's ministers, that could justify their adopting any thing less than the establishment proposed. He had no scruple in declaring, that if the war had terminated in a manner conformable to the wishes of this House; if it had terminated by the attainment of those objects for which it was entered into; if France had been confined within her original limits, he still should have exhorted the House to have acceded to a much larger peace establishment than at any former period: he should have done so for the reasons alluded to by a noble lord; reasons which proved, that, by an increase

Digitized by Google

of our peace establishment, we should not only have a much better chance of the continuance of peace, but of entering upon a war, in case circumstances should render hostile measures indispensable. But the condition in which the late treaty had left France, furnished still stronger arguments for the necessity of a formidable force. Her acquisitions in the Austrian Netherlands, her influence in Holland, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and, in fact, over the whole continent, sufficiently evinced the necessity of a larger armament than would have been requisite, had peace been made under more favourable auspices. He should not act fairly by the committee, if he did not state, that, since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, circumstances had occurred, which furnished additional arguments for increasing our establishment. Taking, then, into consideration the necessity of having a larger establishment than that which existed at former periods, it was a duty imposed on him to recommend the force which had been moved for. Something had been said by an hon. gentleman behind him, to which it was impossible not to advert; referring to what had fallen from another right hon. gentleman, for whom he felt as much respect and regard as could actuate the breast of one human being towards another, he felt himself called upon to answer the insinuation he had thrown out. He had stated, that the right hon. gentleman to whom he alluded was still responsible for the measures of government. He should be ashamed if such charge could be supposed to be correct. For himself, and those who acted with him, he had only to say, that could they be supposed capable of subjecting themselves to the influence of others, they would have been totally undeserving of those marks of favour which their sovereign had bestowed upon them. He trusted he should at all times be ready to vindicate his own personal and official honour.

The resolutions were agreed to.

Dec. 9. The resolutions being reported,

Mr. *T. Grenfell* said, that those who heard what he had advanced when the navy estimates were under consideration, would recollect what were the grounds which he urged on that occasion. His assertion then was, that the House had passed that vote with less information to guide them in the propriety of passing it, than ever was before submitted to parliament on similar occasions. The answer given then to this observation by a noble lord was, that there was nothing in the history of parliament respecting the granting of the information required, that made the late proceedings of the House differ from those of former times. Till now he had no opportunity of answering these contradictions; but he would endeavour briefly to restate his objections. What is our situation, and what lights have we to enable us to judge of it? If we call for those lights we are referred to the speeches of ministers, which convey no information; and even if they did, are such speeches fit parliamentary documents to justify the House in coming to a decision on matters of the gravest moment? He might firmly maintain that no one instance has occurred in the parliamentary history of the country, in which ministers have come down, after the signing of a definitive treaty of peace, to call for supplies or large establishments without having advised his majesty to make some communication from the throne, intimating the probability that the peace would be lasting, or that it might be precarious, or if any dangers of a fresh rupture existed, without alluding to those dangers. The hon. gentleman then appealed to several speeches and messages recorded in the Journals, in corroboration of what he had advanced. The notoriety of a fact did not form a proper parliamentary ground of proceeding. Parliament should have real, solid, substantial documents before them to judge by. The want of such documents on the present occasion appeared to him to be a departure from the usual practice, dangerous to the constitution. Should not the House know what garrisons are to be supplied by the sums now to be voted? It is true that Malta has not yet been evacuated; it is equally known that orders have been sent out to retain the Cape. These were two considerable military points, and their fate should be known before an accurate judgment could be formed of the extent of the supply necessary. The hon. gentleman next proceeded to observe on the manner on which the army estimates were yesterday opened by the secretary at war. Nothing could be more clear, explicit, and manly than that opening; yet at the conclusion of his speech, there were some expressions that called for particular at-

Digitized by Google

tention. The expressions he alluded to were these:—"The object of government in proposing to vote the present force, has two purposes in view, viz. to repel national insult and hostile aggression. He did not object to this use of the force. What he disliked was, that these expressions narrowed too much the effect which might be otherwise expected from it. Were we to vote 130,000 men merely for the purpose of sitting still till the French armies had actually invaded us? Too many of those who spoke on this subject seemed to be of that opinion. Such, however, has rarely been the mode of arguing adopted by that House, nor could he believe that the force now proposed would be limited to the simple purpose of resisting the invasion of the enemy—[a cry of hear! hear! from the treasury bench]. The hon. gentleman professed himself happy in hearing that expression of approbation. He hoped ministers would avail themselves of the force placed at their disposal, to speak a language to France, which should have its due impression. The present government of France, if such language was held out to them, would see the necessity of avoiding what might be fatal to them. To forbear holding a firm and determined language, was only encouraging the first consul to persist in his present wild career of conquest and aggrandizement. He felt much struck with the language held of late upon the subject of continental alliances. Were it our intention to look for an alliance with any great power on the continent, it was no doubt our duty to examine how far such a power might be able or willing to co-operate with us effectually; and when the continental powers saw that we intended to concentre the whole of our force within our own island, and merely for our own defence, what encouragement could they feel to form an alliance with us? But his surprise was raised to an extraordinary degree, when he observed a man (Mr. Fox) whose opinion must always have so much weight in the country, broach doctrines so novel on this topic, and so inconsistent with his former sentiments. When the fate of the king of Sardinia was introduced into a late debate, that hon. gentleman had asked whose fault it was that the king of Sardinia was not restored? Was it the fault of France? no; he had said, it was the fault of Austria, that opposed his restoration, lest it should be purchased at the expense of her Venetian territories. That such an assertion had any foundation he could never bring himself to believe. Did Venice belong to Sardinia? or rather, might not this be a story told to the hon. gentleman by the French secretary of state in the foreign department? Talleyrand might have hinted that France would have given Piedmont to the king of Sardinia, if Austria would consent to cede Venice. It was said that partiality for the character and principles of a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt) prompted him to wish to place that right hon. gentleman at the head of affairs. To this charge he was ready to answer, *Habet confitentem reum.* Indeed it was his conscientious belief, that, if the country were to be canvassed, 99 out of 100 would be found of the same opinion. Were that great majority of the country to see him placed at the helm, their apprehensions would vanish, and a new vigour would be infused into the nation.

Lord *Hawkesbury* contended, that every part of the conduct of government had fully explained the system they had adopted, as far as had been usual, with regard to foreign affairs. It was not consistent with the general practice of the constitution, to bring the details of such discussions before parliament, unless ministers called for some vote or opinion founded upon those details. It had been maintained, that even when a general case had been made out by ministers, without the production of the details, they had a right to call for the support of parliament. This was the case at the period of the Russian armament, and it was afterwards said, on the other side of the House, that while the question was in discussion they had not inquired, but that when ministers called for a direct vote, they had a right to give the House full information upon the subject. With respect to the general system adopted by ministers, it had been asserted, that it was impossible to understand what that system was; as if ministers had never explained themselves upon the general principle of their conduct to France and other powers. He ought, perhaps, upon this subject, to refer to authentic documents, such as the speeches from the throne, and the addresses of that House; but from the nature of these records, they must be taken subject to the explanation of his majesty's confidential servants. It was impossible, in a speech or message from the throne, to enter into such a minute detail as would be necessary for the full explanation of the

Digitized by Google

subject; but he admitted, that in those documents the general principle of the measure proposed ought always to be found. He was ready to contend, that it was impossible to conceive (as far as the circumstance would admit) a more complete explanation of the system which government had adopted, than was to be found in an amendment which he had moved to an address proposed last session by an hon. friend of his. He wished to ask any gentleman the meaning he would put upon the words of that amendment. It contained two propositions, which he did not mean to say could be separated entirely, but which were, however, in some degree distinct. The right hon. gentleman complained, that ministers had not explained whether they would interfere with the continental powers; his answer was, that that point was completely explained in the amendment he had read. He begged shortly to call the attention of the House to the late treaty, and to the address to which he had alluded. When other treaties of peace were concluded, the country negotiated for peace in conjunction with other powers; but when the late treaty was concluded, every power on the continent had been induced or compelled to make separate treaties of peace. We were by those circumstances insulated, and forced to make a separate peace, unconnected with any of the continental powers. His majesty's ministers rested the defence of that treaty upon the circumstances under which it had been proposed and concluded. They stated the line of conduct they had adopted in consequence of the unfortunate events which had happened on the continent; but they at the same time stated, that, so far from abandoning all continental connexions, it must always form a part of the system of this country. If he was asked for the application of that principle, his answer would be, that the application of it must depend upon circumstances and events; they had therefore engrafted that principle into the address to which he had alluded. That address, therefore, contained the system which the king's ministers had adopted, viz. that they would defend our own empire against all encroachments, and look with vigilance to the state of the continent. They had not attempted to define minutely what that line of conduct would be, because it must always be governed by circumstances. If this record wanted any confirmation, he might refer to the king's speech at the opening of the present session. This speech was conformable to the address to which he had before alluded; it maintained the same principles, and held the same language. As far, therefore, as language went, the system of the king's government had been explicitly avowed. The right hon. gentleman might assert, that ministers had not acted upon that system, that they had gone beyond, or had fallen short of it; but he had no right to say that they had not laid down any system. He should have thought, that upon the general principle of continental alliances it was almost unnecessary for him to make any profession. Whenever he had spoken upon the subject, he had uniformly maintained one opinion. It was a subject which had very early occupied his attention, and upon which he had given his opinion the first time he had had the honour of speaking in that House. He recollected that upon that occasion a right hon. friend of his had made a most able and ingenious speech, which contained the best case he had ever heard against the balance of power. But certainly that principle, like all others, might be pushed to an extreme. It appeared to him that it was one of those questions upon which there was great danger of our over-refining; and he thought it was the duty of government to guard against the extremes which a degree of over-refinement might sometimes occasion. That the interests of this country were not materially connected with those of the continent, or that we could exclude ourselves wholly, or even in a great degree, from all continental connexions, it would be absurd to contend. Our commerce, our wealth, our importance in the eyes of Europe, were such, that we could not say that we would entirely insulate ourselves. He knew it had been said upon this subject, that all continental connexions were in their nature dissoluble. This proposition was undoubtedly true; but what was the consequence that was to be inferred from it,—that no human work was in its nature perfect, and that continental alliances, because they were liable to dissolution, ought never to be entered into? That those alliances often contained in themselves the seeds of dissolution, was true; but the question was, whether, with all their defects, we were better with or without them? This was the only practical way of considering the subject. If

Digitized by Google

he looked into the examples contained in history upon this point, he was compelled to draw a very different inference from that which had been drawn by an hon. friend of his (Mr. Canning) on a former occasion. It had been asserted, that we had often been involved in wars by continental alliances; but it remained to be proved, that any of the wars in which we had been engaged had arisen from these alliances. The fact was directly the reverse. In no war which we had undertaken since the Revolution, had we engaged in it in consequence of continental alliances. It might perhaps be said, that we entered into the late war in consequence of an engagement with Holland respecting the opening of the Scheldt; but it must be admitted, that that only formed a part of the general question. He therefore thought it important, that we should not suffer ourselves to be carried away by any general cry that might be raised upon the subject, without ascertaining the facts.—But there was another point to consider, and that was a material one. He wished the House to recollect in what wars we had continental connexions, and in what wars we had not, and to compare the result. The only war in which we had been engaged since the Revolution, in which we had not had any continental alliances was the American war, and that was the only war in which we were not successful. It was true, that in other wars we had sometimes failed, as far as they related to continental objects; but as far as British interests were concerned, we had been constantly successful, except only in the case of the American war. With this view of the subject, he was not disposed to renounce the opinion he had formerly entertained upon it; at the same time he was ready to admit, that there ought to be great prudence used in entering into continental alliances, not only with respect to the connexions themselves, but to the engagements we entered into. We ought not to enter into engagements so loose and so generally worded, as might, in the application of them, defeat their own object; and he also thought, that care ought to be taken not to pledge the country too deeply, because circumstances were frequently liable to change. He had no difficulty in saying, that he should not think he should do his duty, if, maintaining the general principle, he should not endeavour to give it effect whenever he was able, according to circumstances, circumscribed by prudence and wisdom. Insinuations had been thrown out, that this country had met with nothing but treachery and breach of faith from our allies, and that assertion had been particularly exemplified in the case of Austria. If we were to look at that country throughout the whole course of the war, there were periods when that power not only displayed the most inflexible fidelity to her engagements, but the most heroic resolution. She did not conclude the treaties of Leoben or Luneville, till the very last extremity; and when she was prevented by the pressure of circumstances from sending a minister for the purpose of obtaining our consent, which consent, if she had asked, we could not for a moment have refused. Before the conclusion of the last treaty, she showed a degree of fidelity to her engagements with us that never was surpassed; for after the battle of Marengo, she was strongly and repeatedly urged by France to conclude a separate treaty, and terms were offered much more favourable than she afterwards obtained. Notwithstanding every effort on the part of France, Austria would not make peace till she was compelled by the fatal battle of Hohenlinden. An hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox) seemed to think that no change which had taken place in the situation of Europe required an increase in our establishment. It could not be denied that the great extent of coast which France had now obtained, and the number of harbours which she had acquired, must make a great difference in our relative situation. It had been said, that the House of Bourbon were actuated by the same motives of ambition with the revolutionary governments of France, and were as much disposed to violate treaties as any government whatever. This was true to a certain extent; and he was as ready as any man to condemn this part of the policy of the House of Bourbon. But it was necessary to consider not only their will, but their power to do mischief. The present government of France had the power of doing things which the House of Bourbon, whatever its disposition might be, had not the means to accomplish. A great deal had been said, about persons looking only at measures and not at men: he confessed he was very much inclined to consider this as mere cant and hypocrisy, or at least as proceeding from

†

Digitized by Google

ignorance. In one sense, and to a certain degree, they must go together. If any gentleman brought a charge against ministers, it was absurd to suppose that a man could condemn measures, and not wish to remove the men by whom they were adopted. If that House were to agree in a resolution to censure the conduct of ministers, it ought to be followed up with a motion for the removal of those ministers. Nothing could be more absurd than to suppose, that the system of ministers could be disapproved of, and yet that they ought to be kept in office, in hopes that they would adopt a line of conduct contrary to that of which they were known to approve. But this principle had been pushed a little farther, and to an extent to which he could not assent. If a gentleman said he disapproved of the measures of administration, and therefore he would, if possible, remove the ministers, he could understand him; it was fair, constitutional language. The right of that House to address his majesty to remove his ministers, on proper grounds, was incontestable; but to suppose that the House had a right to remove ministers without assigning any public ground whatever, was inconsistent with every principle of the constitution. It would take from the crown the right of choosing its own servants, and make the office of minister the subject of personal canvass. It is true, that in 1784, there was an address to remove ministers, without any charge against their public conduct; but even in that case there was an allegation of their having come improperly into office, though that was found by no means to be the public opinion. He wished merely to be tried by his public conduct; and he could answer for himself, and he believed for his colleagues, that if parliament disapproved of their measures, they would not wish to continue one moment longer in office. If their measures were not found to be consistent with the honour and interests of the country, they would not attempt to set up prerogative against privilege, in any case where the exercise of the latter was really constitutional. If the king had the nomination of his ministers, parliament ought to control them, to watch over them, and to examine their measures, and upon this principal the safety of the constitution depended. He hoped that parliament would always endeavour to preserve to the crown its proper place in the constitution, while they maintained their own privileges; and to the opinion of parliament his majesty's ministers would always submit themselves whenever it was expressed.

Sir *Francis Burdett* said, he agreed with Mr. Grenville, that when, in answer to the just objections which had been urged to this unprecedented military establishment, ministers stated, that the unprecedented situation of the country called for it, they ought to have brought down some communication from the throne as to the nature of that situation. In reference to the hon. gentleman's arguments on the subject of the balance of power, that hon. gentleman had thought proper to denominate that a new doctrine which was very old indeed, namely, that which had been maintained on a former evening by an hon. gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce), and in which he most perfectly concurred. It had been mentioned that that hon. gentleman had argued that we should not at all interfere with the affairs of the continent, but confine ourselves entirely to our insular situation. That opinion he believed to be overstated. That hon. gentleman had argued thus—that we should not be forward to provoke continental quarrels; that we should not form such connexions as would be likely to involve us in such quarrels; and that, though policy or interest might urge us to take a share in their disputes, we should never be the first to attack. Such had been the decided opinion of some of our ablest statesmen, by whom it was uniformly held, that if we should have any thing to do in continental contests, it should never be as principals; that we might become rather arbiters if necessary; that if we interfered, it should be for the purpose of throwing weight into the scale, but not to exhaust our strength. For his part, he had no objection to the principle of the balance of power, subject to these modifications, but he had the strongest objections to the use which had been generally made of that principle. It was too generally the apology which ministers had resorted to for going to war. It was the pretence for throwing dust in the eyes of the country, for it appeared to him impossible to make such a war, a war of the people; the object of it could not be made intelligible to their comprehension, as being materially connected with their interests. Much had been said in the course of the debate

Digitized by Google

of the talents of the right hon. gentleman at the head of the late administration. However unpleasant it might be to censure any man in his absence, he must observe, that the whole of the consequences of which the hon. gentleman and his friends were so fond of drawing such gloomy descriptions, arose from the measures of the late ministers, assisted by their active co-operation. This part of their language was not less inconsistent than that of recommending the return of the same man to office who supported the "disastrous" peace they so vehemently reprobated, and they had also the confidence to assert; that this return was desired by the country. Now, if public opinion was to be attended to, he had no hesitation in maintaining that that opinion was decidedly adverse to such a change. From all he could learn, no minister was ever more completely covered with public indignation and hatred, than the right hon. gentleman alluded to.—A vote for 60,000 soldiers would not alarm him so much, if it were not accompanied by barracks and all those other appendages of a standing army; if it formed not a part of that system which, fatally for the interests of the crown itself, tended to break those constitutional springs which kept up the spirit of the people, which would attach them warmly to their government, and render them ready to defend them from any attack. He had heard much of the economy of ministers; but in his judgment they were beginning the work of reform at the wrong end. In looking over the pension-list, and perusing the number of marriage settlements for earls' daughters, and annuities for the wives of treasury clerks, which it contained, it was enough to make the eyes of any plain Englishman ache. If there really was a necessity for this increased establishment, that necessity was among the legacies which the late ministers left the country. They reduced it to such a situation, that according to the confession of their active friends, a state of war would be dangerous, and yet peace is unattended by security. No state of society could be imagined more discouraging, and such was the consequence of the mischievous system so long and so obstinately persisted in by the late ministers! It had been well observed by an hon. gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce), that without the affections of the people, no establishment could protect the country; no degree of talents could conciliate that affection, or could excite a proper spirit. No. That could only be done by abolishing solitary cells, barracks, and useless pensions—but above all, the people must be adequately represented in parliament. Policy and interest should urge that at the present crisis, which honesty and justice would recommend in any circumstances. To restore our ancient institutions, to replace those old land-marks which the violence of the late ministers removed, was the way to recover that public spirit which is the only sure defence of a country. With regard to the remarks which have been made on measures and men, and the illustration adduced respecting horses and harness, he should say, that if the harness were good, even though the horses were bad, the carriage would be drawn in safety; but if the latter were ever so good and the former bad, the safe movement of the carriage would be endangered. However, it would be much better that both should be good. He should like good men and good measures; and he really did not think either the late or present ministers fit to govern the country. To the present he was not disposed to say any thing harsh, because it was neither provoked nor justified; but he could not help saying, that they did not possess the confidence of the country. Perhaps the colossal power of France, now so much dreaded, might ere long fall to pieces; but, as an Englishman, he did not feel it right to rely on that calculation. Supposing that power solid and secure, he would wish to provide for the protection of this country, and its best protection would consist in strong measures of defence. Those measures, in his judgment, should be, a strong parliament (including a fair representation of the country), strong councils, and above all, a strong and united people.

Mr. *I. H. Browne* combated the arguments of the hon. baronet, respecting the late and present ministers; and gave it as his decided opinion, that Mr. Pitt had been the means, by his great talents and wise measures, of saving both the constitution and the country from utter ruin; and that but for him the Speaker would not now be sitting in the chair of that House. He defended the present establishment, and said it should have his support; and he felt no check to his confidence in voting such a force, to strengthen the hands of those ministers

Digitized by Google

who had formed the treaty of Amiens, and given peace to the country. He did not vote that force for the purpose of recommencing war; for he was sure it was neither their wish nor intention, but for the purpose of maintaining peace, and with it the security and the honour of the country.

Mr. *Calcraft* said, that upon the fullest conviction of the wisdom and good conduct of his majesty's ministers, as well as that the force voted the preceding night, was necessary to the maintenance of peace, national honour, and national security, he gave that vote his most hearty approbation. He believed the ministers had the universal confidence of the people.

Dr. *Laurence* condemned the system upon which ministers acted; particularly in reducing the navy so much since the peace, and proposing to keep up a large standing army, though the former force was our natural defence, and the latter was ever an object of constitutional jealousy. He animadverted on the observations of the noble secretary of state, on the subject of continental alliances, and the balance of power, and compared them with his assertion on a former occasion, that the capture of Oczakow, a fortress on the Black Sea, by the Russians, would endanger the safety of Europe. He reprobated the idea of abandoning that policy, with respect to the continent, upon which this country had acted for the last century and a half. He also reproved the practice of perpetually referring to the conduct of ministers during the last war. The House should not be so goaded. If gentlemen wished to investigate that conduct fully, let it be brought forward in a proper form, and solemnly discussed. He was anxious to know what ideas were meant to be attached to national insults and hostile aggression. Ministers did not explain in what sense these terms were to be understood, and it therefore became necessary to attend a little to facts, so far as they might be useful in determining whether, on the part of France, there had been since the conclusion of the treaty of peace, any acts, with regard to foreign powers, which this country would be entitled to make a ground of remonstrance. On this part of his argument he accordingly examined in detail the system of German indemnities, which he reprobated as subversive of the constitution of the Germanic empire, and destructive of our influence on the continent. He touched slightly on the conduct of the French government towards Switzerland, and the total subjugation of Italy to its will. On the subject of Holland, he descanted with great energy, and pointed out the alarming consequences which French influence in that country presented in the event of a renewal of war. On the importance of our connexion with Holland, he believed there was no difference of opinion. He described with great force the claims which the House of Orange had to our protection, from ancient connexion cemented by common friendship; and the more he considered the fate of this illustrious family, the more was he convinced of the inefficacy of the article in the definitive treaty, which professed to guarantee them a full and complete indemnity. He called the attention of the House to the treatment which captain D'Auvergne had experienced in Paris, in consequence of orders issued by the French government. What he meant to state he did not pretend to state on authority. That respectable officer, even under the protection of a British commission and a regular passport, had been arrested, thrown into a dungeon, and subjected to interrogatories of the most insulting kind. Could any thing be reckoned an attack on our national honour, if such an outrage did not come under that description? He took occasion to allude to a prosecution instituted against M. Peltier, for a supposed libel on the French government. He did not mean to give any opinion against the propriety of such a prosecution, but was pointed on articles which had appeared in the French official journal, containing unbecoming allusions, and indecent reflexions, on the character of our own sovereign.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, it seemed to be urged constantly, as the systematic opinion of the learned member and his friends, that ministers, by the measures they adopted, had compromised the dignity, and tarnished the honour of the empire; without, however, substantiating their accusations by any specific charge. But if they really conceived themselves founded in their assertion, the manly way would be, to bring it forward, and give those whom they accused an opportunity of vindication. The charge of abandoning the indemnity to the prince of Orange was wholly unfounded. Before the approaching recess, he hoped to make

†

Digitized by Google

such a communication to the House as would manifest that his majesty's feelings were by no means dormant to the situation of the illustrious personage alluded to. The next point he thought necessary to notice was, the prosecution commenced against the publisher of a libel upon the chief consul of France. But though the British government certainly were not responsible for the publication which contained that libel, he conceived the first consul was entitled, by the justice of the country, to reparation, as well as every other person in such a case. The next point was the affair of captain D'Auvergne. The moment his situation was made known to his majesty's minister at Paris, a demand was made to the French government for his release, which was instantly obtained; so that the apprehensions of the learned member for the honour and dignity of this country, on this as well as the other occasions, were utterly unfounded. Another topic with the learned member was, the aggrandizing power of France. No man lamented it more than he did; but he could not allow that it was a matter that would warrant the revival of hostilities. The next objection of the learned member was, that ministers called for a large force, without stating any specific necessity; at the same time that his own speech and those of his friends, were fraught with alarm for our situation, and the avowal of that necessity. If the learned member was not disposed to confide in the assurances which ministers were warranted to give, the right way of proceeding would be, to move an address to his majesty, for the documents to show that necessity. The hon. member might do so now; and when produced, they would furnish a justification of the measures adopted by ministers.

Mr. *Fox* alluded to the representation given by Dr. Laurence, of the treatment which had been experienced by a British officer from the French government. Allowing that a remonstrance had been made on the subject by ministers without obtaining satisfaction, he had no hesitation in saying, agreeably to the ideas of national honour which he had often had occasion to express, that he should reckon this an insult of such magnitude as to form a legitimate ground of renewing hostilities. If captain D'Auvergne had been arrested without the smallest pretext, thrown into a dungeon, and subjected to insulting interrogatories; or if the French government had refused to give satisfaction to the honour of the country, wounded in the person of a British officer, this would, in his opinion, be a ten thousand times more justifiable ground of war than any thing drawn from the conduct of France in the system of German indemnities, in the invasion of Switzerland, or any other act of usurpation on the continent. Strongly disposed as he was for the preservation of peace, he declared, without difficulty, that war was an alternative ever to be preferred to insult and infamy. After a few observations on the influence which the state of our finances ought to have in deterring us from hastily plunging again into war, the hon. gentleman vindicated the system he had recommended with regard to continental connexions. Continental connexions were not to be estimated according to a general system. They were to be judged of by a consideration of the circumstances in which the country was placed. He was a friend to continental connexions when they could be advantageous; and at the commencement of the late war he had resisted our entering into them, because the manner in which they were formed was such as to promote nothing but disappointment and disaster. His opinion now was, that the war had left the continent in that state, that if we had an opportunity of forming an alliance with Austria, and even Russia, he should not think such an alliance justified by policy. Gentlemen might ask, were we never again to form any continental alliances? His answer was, that this must depend on circumstances which might hereafter appear in the situation of Europe. He would not say that such alliances might not be hereafter renewed with advantage; but this was not the moment for such a renewal. Adverting merely to the interests of Austria, he could not conceive it to be either fair or friendly in this country, to seek the renewal of any alliance with that power, when such an alliance might only have the effect of exposing her to attacks from France, which she was unable to resist. No man was more anxious than himself to keep up a high spirit in the country; but the time for exerting that spirit was to be regulated by circumstances. What might be very wise and political under certain circumstances, might under circumstances of a different nature, be ruinous to our best interests, and he thought that to embark in foreign connexions at this time,

Digitized by Google

would be to expose ourselves to such consequences. If the House and the country had acquiesced in the peace, and the unsatisfactory state of the continent on which the peace was concluded, the same acquiescence was demanded on every principle of policy and common sense. The learned gentleman had been offended at charges produced against the late administration, and had called on an hon. baronet to come forward and produce the proof on a regular inquiry. He was really astonished to hear gentlemen making use of such language. Had he and those with whom he had the honour of acting been slack in demanding inquiry into the conduct of the late ministers? Had they not from year to year proposed inquiry, and had not the friends of ministers as generally resisted all investigation? With much more justice might this charge be retorted on the learned gentleman and his friends of the new opposition. They were indeed liable to a charge of inconsistency, which they would not find it so easy to repel. Supporting every public measure, they still were dissatisfied with ministers. They were perpetually accusing them of imbecility, and yet never had they the manliness to prefer against them a specific charge. He was very pointed on the subject of the German indemnities, which he condemned as a system of the most gross violation of all honesty and justice, and adduced this as an additional reason why, for the present at least, German alliances should be avoided. He should rejoice in any plan to reduce French influence on the continent, but of this there was at present no rational prospect. With regard to Holland, there was nothing he so much lamented as the acquisition of influence which France had gained in that country, connected as it was with Belgium; but he saw no use in constantly complaining on this subject, unless some means could be pointed out of redressing the grievance.

Mr. *Windham* said, that the speech of his learned friend had been complained of as long. Long it might be by the clock; but certainly not by the matter it contained. With regard to the affair of the prince of Orange, his learned friend had been called to that subject by what an hon. gentleman had stated respecting foreign powers. That was a very erroneous opinion; and it was proper that his learned friend should refute the charge against Austria and other states. By our honesty, "of which the hon. gentleman had said so much, was, perhaps, meant this, that foreign powers should be bound to us, but not we to them. If this country had been in such danger as Austria was previous to the treaty of Luneville, he believed those who held this language would have been the first to cry out that we ought to take care of ourselves, and think no more of our allies. The business with regard to the prince of Orange was a gross fraud upon this country. It might be guessed, from what the right hon. gentleman had stated, that this indemnity was to be made up by hard English guineas. What, then, became of our point of honour? Capt. D'Auvergne's case was another point which he thought might convince the hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox), that the honour of the country was not perfectly safe. It was said, that ministers practised at once conciliation and firmness. This brought to his recollection the story of a man, reputed religious, who having committed a dishonourable transaction, excused himself by saying to a bishop, "my lord, it was only a pious fraud." The bishop, however, answered, that he could distinguish the fraud, but not the piety; so he, with respect to ministers, could easily see the conciliation, but could not discover an atom of the firmness. He agreed perfectly that there was no retreat for this country in meanness. It was with us, *aut Cæsar, aut nullus*. We must be a great nation or nothing? He wished to know where the point of honour so much talked of was to be found. It it did not exist in the case of the prince of Orange, or of captain D'Auvergne, where did it exist? This shifting of the point of honour reminded him of what was said to happen to travellers in a part of Essex, who, when they asked for a district remarkable for being visited by fevers and agues, were always told by the inhabitants, that the place was not just where they were, but a little farther on. He had often been accused of entertaining high chivalresque notions with respect to the relations of this country and France. He, however, disclaimed all such ideas. He grounded the whole of his arguments upon the plain vulgar prosaic ground of safety. His opinion was, that the places to be given by the treaty ought to be retained; but certainly not, unless there were just pretexts for doing so.

Digitized by Google

Lord *Castlereagh* thought that Mr. Fox under-rated the danger in which this country was placed and that Mr. Windham over-rated it. The powers of the present French government being greater than any former, to call forth the resources and population of the country, was one reason for an increased establishment in this country. It ought not at the same time to be forgotten that there were too many appearances of a disposition in the French government to interfere with other nations. One hon. gentleman thought that our military establishment might be lower, since our navy was so much superior to that of the rest of Europe. Much as he rejoiced in the superiority of our navy, he did not think that was a mode of defence on which the country ought entirely to rely. To show that an invasion might take place notwithstanding the superiority of our navy, he instanced the arrival of the French expedition in Bantry Bay, when the landing was prevented only by a storm. He blamed the practice of running down continental alliances. He did not think that any of the acts of the French government since the treaty of Amiens formed a ground of war. He saw much in the state of France and Europe which he deeply regretted; but should we not make things worse if we interfered? He was aware of the commercial and maritime faculties of France. But we had got a start of her, which it would be impossible for her to overtake, if we were true to ourselves.

The report was agreed to.

Debate on the Budget.] Dec. 10. The House having resolved itself into a committee of Ways and Means,

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* then rose, and began by observing, that before he entered upon the subjects to which his notice referred, he was desirous of submitting to the committee the grounds on which he was induced to bring them forward so early in the session. It would appear from the notice, that it was his intention to propose a vote of 4,000,000*l.* on the credit of the growing produce of the consolidated fund; and also to take a general view of the financial situation of the country, as far as it could be explained with any degree of accuracy at the present period of the year.

The immediate occasion of the motion which he had to propose was to be found in the extraordinary produce of the revenue during the last half year. It would be recollected, that 4,500,000*l.* had been voted on the credit of the consolidated fund for one year, to the 5th of April 1803. Of that sum no less than 3,800,000*l.* had been realized on the 10th of October last; and there was little doubt that, at the end of the current quarter, viz. on the 5th of January, the surplus of the consolidated fund would exceed the 700,000*l.* necessary to complete the whole sum. The committee, therefore, would be aware, that, unless a power were given to his majesty to apply to the public service such further surplus as might accrue, a considerable sum might remain dead and useless in the exchequer, whilst money must be raised by other means to defray the necessary expenses.

The reason for the second part of the notice was, the intimate and inseparable connexion between the state of the consolidated fund and the general financial situation of the country; and as the House had already voted a large part of the supplies for the ensuing year, it could not but be material that the public should be apprized of the means by which those supplies were to be raised.

Mr. Addington then proceeded to advert to the financial operations of the year 1802. The committee would recollect, that, in the last session of the late parliament, a capital of 97,000,000*l.* had been provided for; of which, 56,500,000*l.* was the amount of the sum, for the redemption of which the income tax had been made responsible; about 11,000,000*l.* arose from the funding of exchequer bills, and the remaining 30,000,000*l.* from the loan of the present year.

For this sum, the charge to be provided somewhat exceeded 3,100,000*l.* It would not be forgotten that a hope had been expressed on his part, that the produce of the taxes intended to cover the amount of this charge would prove considerably more than adequate to that object; and he had peculiar satisfaction in stating, that the hope so expressed had been realized. A complaint had, at the time, been made, of his having proposed taxes, the produce of which would greatly exceed what was requisite to defray the charge of the debt to be provided for. To this accusation he had pleaded guilty, and had admitted his expectation to be, that their produce would not fall short of 4,000,000*l.* How did the matter stand?

Digitized by Google

In the first quarter, the taxes on malt, beer, on exports and imports, and on the tonnage of shipping, actually yielded 926,000*l.* To this might be added the additional assessed taxes, of which scarcely any part had yet been received, and which were estimated at 1,000,000*l.* per annum. With the addition therefore of one-fourth of this sum to that which had been realized, it would appear that the produce of the taxes of 1802, in the quarter ending the 10th of October in that year, might be fairly estimated at 1,170,000*l.*

Mr. Addington then said, that it would be remembered he had stated on a former day, that one effect of the ample provision made in the last session had been, that it had afforded the means of accomplishing a considerable reduction of the outstanding unfunded debt, of which no less than 18,000,000*l.* had been taken out of the market.

The unfunded debt, in exchequer bills and navy debt, which, in November 1801, amounted to upwards of 37,300,000*l.* had been reduced to about 19,500,000*l.*; of which 3,000,000*l.* which had been advanced by the Bank as a consideration for the renewal of their charter, bore no interest, and was not payable till the year 1806; and 900,000*l.* was charged on the annual taxes of the present year, the arrears of which would be sufficient for the liquidation of that sum. Deducting therefore 3,900,000*l.* which never came into the market, and 4,500,000*l.* of navy debt, the remaining exchequer bills scarcely exceeded 11,000,000*l.* and of these parliament, since its meeting, had provided for the discharge of 4,281,000*l.*; and it would appear by the accounts laid before the House, that the outstanding exchequer bills, previous to the commencement of the war, amounted to 9,500,000*l.*

It also afforded him the greatest satisfaction to be enabled to state, that with the exception only of the army extraordinaries, the grants of the last session had been found sufficient to provide for all the services of the year. Gentlemen, he was sure, would recollect, that he had formerly expressed his apprehensions that the sum of 1,600,000*l.* which had been voted for army extraordinaries, would prove inadequate to the demand. Every one must be aware of the impossibility at all times of making a correct estimate for that branch of the public service; and in the present instance an unavoidable increase of expense had been occasioned by the detention of our troops on foreign stations longer than there had been reason to expect. He could not but feel concern in estimating the excess in that particular branch of the expenditure at upwards of one million; but he had the consolation of being able to state, that the total expenses of the extraordinaries of the army in 1802 would not be found to exceed one-half of their amount in the preceding year. It was also satisfactory to reflect, that the economical management of the naval service had effected a reduction of no less than 4,500,000*l.* of the navy debt, which had been discharged out of the votes of the year.

He next proceeded to lay before the committee a statement of the supplies and Ways and Means for the ensuing year. For the navy there had been voted 50,000 seamen, at 7*l.* per man per month, the expense of which would amount to 4,550,000*l.*

SUPPLIES, 1803.

Navy—50,000 men at 7*l.* per man per month	£.4,550,000	
Ordinary and extraordinary	1,218,238	
Buildings, &c.	901,140	
		£.6,669,378
Army	5,500,000	
Extraordinaries (including surplus extraordinaries issued in 1802)	2,000,000	
		7,500,000
Ordnance		787,947
Corn Bounties		524,573
Miscellaneous, England	}	1,000,000
Ditto Ireland	}	
Irish Permanent Grants		363,339
Amount of joint charge		16,845,237

Digitized by Google

ENGLAND'S SEPARATE CHARGES:

To pay off Exchequer bills on aids 1801	2,781,000	
Ditto — — on aids 1803, Bank	1,500,000	
Repayment to India Company	1,000,000	
Interest on Exchequer bills, and discount, &c.	600,000	
Reduction of national debt	100,000	
		5,981,000
Total supplies		22,826,237

WAYS AND MEANS, 1803.

Land and Malt	2,750,000
Surplus consolidated fund	6,500,000
Exchequer bills on aids 1804	11,000,000
Lottery	500,000
	£.20,750,000

Estimate of Exchequer Bills outstanding on 31st December 1801		14,180,000
To be funded	7,000,000	
To be paid off	4,281,000	
		11,281,000
		2,899,000
Proposed to be issued on aids 1804		11,000,000
		£.13,899,000

By the estimates on the table it would appear, that the remaining naval services, for which votes would shortly be proposed to parliament, amounted, under the head of Ordinary and Extraordinary, to 1,218,238*l.* and for building and repairing ships of war, to 901,140*l.*; making a total expense, for this great branch of our national defence, of 6,669,378*l.*

For the army there had been voted about 5,500,000*l.* and when the amount of the extraordinaries was laid before parliament, which could not take place till the end of the year, a farther vote would be proposed for repaying the excess which had arisen under that head, and for providing an estimated sum for the service of the ensuing year. These sums, as nearly as he now could judge, would amount to 2,000,000*l.*, making a total of military expense of 7,500,000*l.*

For the ordnance there had been voted 787,947*l.*

For the repayment to the consolidated fund for bounties on the importation of corn, advanced out of the revenue of customs, 524,573*l.*

Of the miscellaneous services for the united kingdom, he could not at present form an accurate statement; but judging from the expenditure of former years, he thought they might probably amount to about 1,000,000*l.*; to which were to be added the permanent grants for the civil government of Ireland, amounting to 363,339*l.*

The total of these various sums, amounting to 16,845,237*l.* formed the joint charge to be provided for by the different parts of the united kingdom, in the proportions settled by the act of union.

The proportion of Ireland, being two-seventeenths, would be 1,981,792*l.* and that part of the united kingdom was likewise bound to contribute two-seventeenths of the expense of the civil list of Great Britain, and of the other charges on the consolidated fund, not connected with the public debt, amounting to 141,223*l.*

He should now proceed to state the separate charges to be provided for by Great Britain, omitting those of Ireland, which would, on a future occasion, be stated by his right hon. friend, the chancellor of the exchequer for Ireland.

The first sum arose from a vote, which had lately been agreed to by the House, to pay off exchequer bills charged upon the aids of 1801, amounting to 2,781,000*l.*

The next to be considered was, a sum, of which an account was on the table, and for which a vote would shortly be proposed, being the remainder of an advance of 3,000,000*l.* made by the Bank in the year 1798, upon the credit of exchequer bills, and which had been annually renewed till the present year, when one-half of them had been paid off. The remaining sum amounted to 1,500,000*l.*

A farther charge arose from an account subsisting between government and the East India company, for military expenses

Digitized by Google

incurred in different expeditions. As the accounts of the armament which had been sent from India to Egypt were not yet brought home, no precise estimate could at present be formed of the balance. But it appeared probable, from an investigation which had already taken place, that a considerable sum would be due to the East India company, and he should for the present make provision for a payment on account, of 1,000,000*l.*

There were other separate charges, the amount of which could not at present be ascertained with complete accuracy; they arose from interest on exchequer bills, discounts on the loan and lottery, and certain other payments which, in the account annually laid before parliament, of the distribution of the money granted for public service, were classed under the title of payments, not being part of the supplies of the year. He should estimate them at 700,000*l.* and he had no reason to think they would exceed that amount. The total of these separate charges was 5,981,000*l.*; which, added to the total of the joint charge before stated, at 16,845,237*l.* amounted to the sum of 22,826,237*l.* From this sum deducting 2,123,015*l.* to be contributed by Ireland, it would appear that the expense to be provided for by Great Britain was 20,703,222*l.*

To meet this supply Mr. Addington said he should propose the following Ways and Means: The annual malt tax, and the other taxes usually granted from year to year in the room of the land tax had already been voted by this House. Their amount had been taken at 2,750,000*l.* and there was no probability of a deficiency arising upon these annual grants, as had formerly been the case, the land tax having usually fallen short of its nominal amount, while the taxes substituted for it have constantly produced the estimated sum.

The next head to which he should proceed, was the surplus of the consolidated fund, which he should estimate at 6,500,000*l.* His reasons for expecting a produce to that amount, and for the difference between that sum and 4,000,000*l.* for which a vote would be proposed to the committee, he begged leave to defer to another part of his statement.

The produce of the lottery for the ensuing year he should estimate at 500,000*l.*; and without entering at present into any detail on that part of the subject, it would be a satisfaction to the committee to know that the new system which had been introduced into the drawing and regulations of the lottery, had been productive of the most beneficial effects.

The only remaining article he had to state, was an issue of exchequer bills on the aids of 1804, to the extent of 11,000,000*l.* Gentlemen might be surprised at his mentioning so large a sum, and it might be necessary for him to explain the grounds of this proposition, and the mode by which it was intended to carry it into effect. He had already observed, that the exchequer bills now in circulation amounted to about 11,000,000*l.* only exclusive of those which were held by the Bank and bore no interest; and that the amount of those outstanding, previous to the war, was about 9,500,000*l.* The increase of our trade, and the enlarged sphere of our money transactions since that period, made that additional sum no more than was commensurate with, perhaps necessary for, the convenience of our pecuniary dealings, and our commerce. Of this there were abundant proofs in the premium which exchequer bills now bore, notwithstanding the reduction of their interest; in the unwillingness of the holders to pay them into the exchequer in discharge of taxes; and in the applications made for fresh bills in place of such as were advertised to be paid off.—Assuming, therefore, that the quantity of exchequer bills now in the market was not greater than public convenience required, he should proceed to show that it was not his intention to make any considerable addition to it, but that, at the end of the year, they would not be more than equal to their present amount.

The exchequer bills now outstanding including the sum advanced by the Bank amounted to 14,180,000*l.* of which it was proposed to vote the re-payment of 4,281,000*l.* This sum would be replaced by the gradual issue of the 5,000,000*l.* which have lately been voted on the aids of 1803; and when, by the addition of further sums which parliament might vote after the recess, such a number of exchequer bills should have been issued as to admit of the measure, without too great a reduction of their amount, it was his intention to propose that a part of them, to the extent of from 6 to 8,000,000*l.* should be funded. This, however, would not take place till a late period of the session; and it was the

Digitized by Google

only financial operation which he had at present in contemplation. The committee would understand, that if at the time it should be found impracticable to make a bargain with the holders of the bills proposed to be funded, on terms sufficiently favourable to the public, it would be necessary to propose a loan to the same extent, for the purpose of paying them off. He should not now trouble the committee with any statement of the means which had occurred to him for defraying the additional charge which would thus be created; but he had a confident hope, that he should, at the proper time, be able to propose such as would be sufficient for the purpose, without any material addition to the burdens of the public. Supposing, therefore, 7,000,000*l.* of exchequer bills to be either funded or paid off, and adding that sum to 4,281,000*l.* for which parliament had already provided, it would appear, by deducting that aggregate sum from 14,180,000*l.* the amount of exchequer bills now outstanding added to the 11,000.000*l.* proposed to be issued, that the exchequer bills at the close of the year 1803, would be reduced to near 300,000*l.* below their present amount. In this statement he had supposed the 5,000,000*l.* lately voted, although charged on the aids of 1803, to form part of the 11,000,000*l.* intended for the service of the ensuing year, because such part of that sum as might bepaid off, would be replaced by other bills; and so many as might remain in circulation would be considered as constituting part of that sum. Upon a recapitulation of the Ways and Means, they would be found to amount to 20,750,000*l.* exceeding by 47,000*l.* the amount of the supply.

Mr. Addington then stated it to be important to take a review of the services of the ensuing year, distinguishing such as were of a permanent nature from such as were merely occasional and temporary. It was only by such a review that it would be possible for the committee to form a judgment how far the ordinary resources of the country were capable of meeting its permanent expenditure.

Amongst the permanent services, he included the navy and army, except such a part of the supply as might be necessary for defraying the excess of the extraordinaries for the present year, which which was to be considered, not as a part of the services for the year 1803, but as the repayment of a debt contracted in 1802. To these were to be added the ordnance, the miscellaneous services of Great Britain and Ireland, and the interest on such exchequer bills as might be usually kept in circulation. In speaking of these services as permanent, he by no means meant to infer, that they were likely to continue at their present amount, but merely that they were heads of expenditure which might always be expected to exist, although varying in their extent according to the circumstances of the times. The total of these charges in the ensuing year would be about 16,000,000*l.* of which the British proportion would somewhat exceed 14,000,000*l.*

In the class of occasional payments, he should place the corn bounties, the repayment of the excess of army extraordinaries of 1802, the payment of the exchequer bills charged upon the aids of 1801, and of the loan from the Bank in 1798, and the discharge of the balance which might be found to be due to the East India company. The total amount of these several sums he estimated at 6,800,000*l.*

With respect to the permanent expenses, he was deeply impressed with the conviction, which he trusted was no less strongly felt by the House, and by the country, that whatever might be the permanent expenditure, which a due regard to the support of public credit, and to our actual situation, might require, we ought resolutely to determine that the amount of our permanent revenue should be made to correspond with its demands. Even if, instead of the prospect of an increasing revenue, he had been obliged to lay before the committee the statement of a deficiency, his opinion on this subject would be the same. We must not attempt to compromise by endeavouring to reduce our expenditure to our revenue, but resolve to keep our revenue on a level with our necessary expenditure. In such a system alone could he see solid wisdom, or discern the probability of future honour and security.

He next called the recollection of the committee to the difference which appeared between the vote which it was his intention to propose to them on the credit of the consolidated fund, namely 4,000,000*l.* and the sum of 6,500,000*l.* which in his statement of the ways and means he had estimated as the surplus in the ensuing year. He had proposed a vote

Digitized by Google

so moderate, because it would answer the immediate purpose of enabling him to apply to the public service the sums which might be realised as the surplus of the consolidated fund in the two next quarters, and would afford the means of ascertaining by actual experience, whether the expectations, which he thought himself fully justified in entertaining of its produce during the remainder of the year, were likely to be accomplished. By so cautious a proceeding, the public service would be guarded against the effects of any possible disappointment. He would, however, shortly state to the committee the grounds of the confidence which he was disposed to entertain: it was founded on the actual produce of the three last quarters, ending the 10th of October last. The amount of the surplus of the consolidated fund in that period was 5,508,067*l.* To this was to be added the bounties paid on the importation of corn within that interval, and not yet repaid by parliament, being 431,729*l.*; and the sum which might have been expected from the produce of the taxes of the present year, which were not in collection during the two first of those quarters, these might be taken at 2,000,000*l.* and the total would be 7,939,796*l.* From this was to be deducted the sums which had been paid into the consolidated fund during the same period on account of the income tax, and which amounted to 2,054,893*l.* Allowing for this deduction, the total produce of the three quarters would be 5,884,903*l.* If the ensuing year proved equally productive, the total of the surplus in four quarters would be no less than 7,845,000*l.* And it was satisfactory to observe, that this sum greatly exceeded the produce of the most favourable year on record, as the largest amount ever known of the surplus of the consolidated fund, which was in the year ending 5th Jan. 1792, a period of increasing wealth and acknowledged prosperity, was no more than 4,300,000*l.* Yet though he saw no reason to apprehend a diminution of any part of the revenue, he would not reckon upon a sum so large as might have been inferred from the experience of the three last quarters, and he had therefore limited his expectations to 6,500,000*l.*

Inferences no less favourable might be drawn from the produce of the permanent taxes in the year ending the 10th of October. It would appear from the account referred to the committee, that the nett produce of the old permanent taxes in that period was 13,853,724*l.* To this should be added the payments for corn bounties, amounting to 1,630,000*l.* This made a total of 15,483,724*l.* Comparing this sum with the produce of the same taxes in the year 1792, the most productive year previous to the war, and with the year 1799, the most productive year ever known, it will appear to exceed the amount in the former year by about a million, and to fall short of it in the latter by about 250,000*l.*; but it must be recollected, that for one quarter of the last year the distilleries were stopped, in consequence of which a very material branch of the revenue was considerably reduced; and as the distilleries were chiefly carried on during the interval between the months of September and April, the loss in the quarter, which ended on the 5th January, was nearly equal to the loss of half a year's produce. To the sum just mentioned of 15,483,724*l.* was to be added the produce of the taxes imposed since the commencement of the war, which in the same period was 11,345,364*l.* making a total of permanent taxes of 26,829,088*l.*

These statements, with reference to the last year, would be admitted to be satisfactory. Our future prospects were no less so. It would be found, by a reference to the accounts which from time to time had been laid before the House, that a progressive increase had for several years past taken place in the produce of the permanent taxes; not that every year had exhibited proofs of increase, as, indeed, the course of the seasons, and many other accidental circumstances must necessarily occasion frequent fluctuations; but if periods of three, four, or five years were compared, the average of the latter would be constantly found to exceed that of the preceding period. Considering how much the produce of the revenue was connected with the prosperity and comforts of the people, as evinced by their consumption of the articles on which it was levied, this continual increase was an undeniable proof of the growing wealth and resources of the country. But there were other indications not less satisfactory and decisive of its increasing prosperity—he meant those which were to be found in the accounts of our commerce and navigation.

It was not possible till the conclusion of the year, when all these accounts were made up, that they could be laid regularly before the House, or stated with exactness. Great pains had, however, been taken to procure the most accurate and complete information which the period of

Digitized by Google

the year admitted, and he thought himself justified, by what had been obtained, in pronouncing the commerce of the country to be in a state of unrivalled and unexampled prosperity. It appeared that the real value of the principal articles of British produce and manufactures exported during the year ending 10th of October 1802, was 27,900,000*l*., while, in the preceding year, it was something less than 24,500,000*l*. Supposing these articles to bear the same proportion to the whole of our exports which they had done in former years, the total value of British manufactures exported in the year 1802 would not fall short of 50,000,000*l*. sterling, being an increase of 8,000,000*l*. above the year preceding; and, compared with any former year, the increase would be still more extraordinary.

The accounts of shipping were more imperfect than those of trade, as no quarterly account was made up, except in the port of London; but so far as the fact could be ascertained, it was no less satisfactory, especially with regard to the important circumstance of the increase of British shipping and seamen.

In the year ending the 10th of October 1801, 1,762 British ships, measuring 418,631 tons, and manned with 23,096 men, had entered that port, and 1,331 ships, measuring 350,634 tons, and carrying 24,070 men, had cleared outwards. In the year 1802, the British ships which entered inwards were 2,459, the tonnage 574,700, the men 33,743. The British ships which cleared outwards were 1,933, the tonnage 419,067, the men 28,112.—The diminution of foreign shipping was not less remarkable than the increase of British. In 1801, the number of foreign ships which entered inwards was 3,385, their tonnage 452,677, their men 20,388. The foreign ships which cleared outwards were 3,381, their tonnage 445,651, the men 23,302. In the year 1802, the number of foreign ships entering inwards was reduced to 1,549, their tonnage 214,117, the men 10,555. The foreign ships which cleared outwards were 1,868, their tonnage 262,006, the men 14,826.—These details he feared might be tedious; but he was persuaded the committee would excuse him for having entered with minuteness into the proofs of the increase of our commerce and maritime strength, which were the great sources of our prosperity, and of our power.

Mr. Addington then said, that he was aware it would be useless for him to take up the time of the committee by any comments on these statements, or to attempt to strengthen the impression, which he trusted had been made by the plain and incontrovertible facts which he had laid before them. He might, however, be permitted to express some satisfaction in looking back to the period to which this statement applied, and to the circumstances which had, as it now appeared, justified the hopes he had held out in the last session of parliament. It would be recollected, that strong apprehensions were then expressed, that the conclusion of peace would be followed by a diminution of our commerce, and consequently of our revenue. The event had happily proved that such apprehensions were ill founded. He added, that whilst every individual in the united kingdom, capable of feeling for the welfare of his country, must rejoice at these unquestionable indications of our commercial prosperity, there was perhaps no country in Europe which might not justly participate in that feeling, as being interested in our commerce, and partaking of its benefits. What was gained by Great Britain, was very far from being lost by the continent. So far from the pre-eminence of Great Britain in this respect having proved injurious to other countries, it had not only enabled her to stand forward as the protectress of civilized Europe, but of the trade and commerce of the rest of the world. In the known and established policy of this country—in our resources—in our maritime strength, the greater part of Europe had, for more than a century past, found its best security. And he would affirm, that whatever might have been our views, whatever our principles, whatever our motives, in some of the contests in which we had been engaged, the general tendency of our connexions with the continent had been to preserve the due relation between the foreign powers, and to maintain their rights and their independence. Such had been the effect of our operations on the continent: such had been the consequence of our exertions on the ocean. He could not look forward to the renewal or improvement of the commerce of other countries with any apprehension of inconvenience or danger from their rivalship. It had been well said by a noble friend of his (lord Castlereagh) in a preceding debate,

Digitized by Google

that we had the start of them all; and he could not entertain a doubt but that the combined operation of pre-eminent skill, credit, capital, and industry, would preserve to us the superiority which we now possessed.

Mr. Addington then adverted to the state of the sinking fund, which he considered as one of the most powerful instruments by which the country had been enabled to cope with and surmount its greatest difficulties. When that wise and salutary system was first adopted, the sum applied to the reduction of the national debt was about one-tenth of its interest, which then amounted to near 10,000,000*l.* Such, however, had been the happy operation of that system, that, at the present moment, when the amount of the interest is 18,000,000*l.* the sum applicable to the reduction of the debt is 6,000,000*l.* which, instead of one-tenth, is equal to one-third of the interest of the existing debt. The sum of 6,000,000*l.* was thus annually thrown into circulation, and was daily operating towards the improvement of our agriculture, the encouragement of our manufactures, and the extension of our commerce. The effects of this system were thus diffused in numberless channels through the whole body of the country, improving its resources, invigorating its strength, and gradually enlarging its means of prosperity.

Having stated circumstances so highly favourable to the revenue, the commerce, and the future prospects of Great Britain, Mr. Addington said, that it was impossible for him to refrain from troubling the committee with a few words on a subject of no less interest and importance, and which could not fail to afford the utmost satisfaction to every gentleman who heard him—he alluded to the rapid increase in the prosperity of Ireland. In considering the sources of this happy change, he could not hesitate to declare his decided conviction, that its primary cause was to be found in the important measure of the incorporation of the two kingdoms. Of this he thought there was abundant and substantial proof, though other collateral circumstances might probably have contributed to produce it. He had the satisfaction of being enabled to state, that in August last the revenue of Ireland had been found to exceed that of the corresponding period in the former year by the sum of 920,000*l.* He was not enabled to inform the committee what was the excess at the present moment, the accounts not having been made up; but from what he had mentioned, it was evident that the improvement in the revenue of Ireland had been even greater in proportion than that of Great Britain.

He then observed, in answer to some apprehensions which had been expresed in a late debate, that our finances might not prove equal to a permanent establishment so large as the present; that it was to be recollected, this was only the establishment of 1803, which it was not probable would increase, but might possibly admit of no inconsiderable diminution. He had not stated that our revenues (augmented as they had lately been) were equal to the support of all the establishments on such a scale as that of the ensuing year; but he had said that, with strict economy, a military establishment far greater than had ever been known in time of peace, and not very much inferior to the present, might be maintained by the revenue of the country, supposing its future produce to be in proportion to that of the three last quarters. To illustrate this statement, he would assume that a reduction to the extent of 1,000,000*l.* might, at a future time, be made in our military expenses. Deducing this sum from the army estimates of the present year, and allowing 500,000*l.* for extraordinaries, the expense of our military service would amount to 5,200,000*l.* For the naval service in its different branches he should allow 4,230,000*l.*, a sum capable of maintaining a force nearly double of that which had been kept up in any former peace. For the ordnance he should allow 800,000*l.*, which rather exceeded the sum voted this year; and for the miscellaneous services of the united kingdom, including the Irish permanent grants, 1,300,000*l.* The total amount of the joint contribution would in that case be 11,530,000*l.* Adding 500,000*l.* for the separate charges of Great Britain to the British proportion of the above sum, the total to be provided by Great Britain would be 10,583,000*l.* To meet this expense we might reckon on the following ways and means:

The usual annual taxes amounted to 2,750,000*l.* The surplus of the consolidated fund, estimated according to its produce in the three last quarters, 7,845,000*l.*; and the lottery 500,000*l.* The total of these sums was 11,095,000*l.* exceeding the supplies he had stated by upwards of 500,000*l.* To this might be

Digitized by Google

added the contribution from India of 500,000*l.* a year; for he was convinced that his right hon. friend who lately presided in the Indian department, was fully justified in the confidence he had expressed in the solidity and progressive improvement of the resources of the East India company. He added, that this opinion was not hastily formed, for that he had recently thought it his duty to investigate the grounds upon which it was founded with all the minuteness and attention in his power.

Mr. Addington said, that he doubted not the committee would participate in the satisfaction with which he contemplated the result of the facts he had thus laid before them. But however sanguine might be our hopes, however well-founded our expectations, we ought not to give way to feelings of disappointment if they should not hereafter be realized to their full extent. Our minds should be made up to the result, whatever it might be. Should greater expenses prove necessary, the means of providing for them must be found. Should unforeseen difficulties present themselves, they must, and he had no doubt they would, be met with the firmness and spirit which they called for, and by which alone they could be surmounted. No one would deny that a frequent recourse to loans in time of peace would be injurious to the interests of the country. The estimate of our permanent peace establishment could not as yet be ascertained with precision; but he could not too often repeat, that at all events our revenue must be made to meet the demands of our expenditure.

Mr. Addington, after apologizing for having detained the committee with statements so much in detail, which, however, on such a subject, appeared almost unavoidable, requested their attention for a short time longer. The statement which he had made had chiefly been confined to matters of fact, and had required little illustration. He had hazarded no conjectures, except on grounds which appeared to him to be solid and substantial; and he was unwilling to trespass farther on the indulgence of the House, by entering into a detail of the causes which he conceived to have led to our present prosperous and flourishing condition: he should only say, in general, that much of it was to be ascribed to the eminent talents which had lately presided over the finances of the country;—much to the wisdom and fortitude of parliament;—much to the good sense and energy of the people. For himself he claimed no merit but that of having adopted the system, and of having endeavoured to follow the example which was before him. But he would venture to appeal even to those who had indicated no little asperity in commenting on his general conduct, whether he was justly chargeable with having shrunk from the financial difficulties of the country. It seemed to be admitted on a former night, that, during the continuance of the war, it could not be imputed to his majesty's present servants that they had neglected to prosecute it with energy and vigour.

Mr. Addington then adverted generally to the situation and prospects of the country, which appeared to him to afford abundant ground of satisfaction and hope; and concluded with moving, "That towards raising the supplies there be granted a sum of 4,000,000*l.* out of the growing produce of the consolidated fund."

The motion was agreed to.

Debate in the Lords on the Malt Duty Bill.] Dec. 13. On the motion, that this bill be read a first time,

Earl *Spencer* reminded the House, that this was the first bill of supply which had been offered to their lordships' consideration, in this first parliament which had been called since the Union; he therefore thought they should hesitate in letting it pass a single stage, before they had received more information as to the state of the country. It had been customary at every former period, to lay more precise information before parliament, of the state of the country with respect to its foreign relations, than had been done at the opening of the present session. He thought it strange, that those ministers who made the peace, and had given such strong assurances of its continuance, should now demand such a large establishment, without assigning sufficient reasons. He had heard it whispered, that it was partly through fear of offending France, that the usual communications had not been made to parliament; if this were true, and ministers had allowed themselves to be influenced by such unworthy considerations, they did not deserve to retain their situations a single hour. It had been, however, supposed that they were governed by that principle, both in the affair of Napper Tandy, and of count D'Auvergne.

Digitized by Google

Lord *Pelham* said, that in the latter instance, the French government had released count D'Auvergne as soon as application had been made for that purpose by the British minister, and the conduct of government with respect to Napper Tandy, was occasioned by circumstances very different from a fear of offending France.

The Earl of *Carlisle* supported the opinion which had been given by earl Spencer.

The Duke of *Norfolk* differed from both the noble earls. He thought the circumstances of the times were notorious enough, to justify ministers in proposing an increased establishment.

Lord *Limerick* justified the conduct of ministers. He thought peace had been necessary for the recovery of our strength, and he hoped before war was renewed, the disturbances which had existed in Ireland would be at an end, and the people of that country reconciled to the mild government and free constitution of the country.

Lord *Grenville* thought the House could proceed no farther in the bill, without information from his majesty, as to the causes which called for an extraordinary supply. It had been the invariable usage for the last hundred years, for the crown to demand such supply, and to state its reasons, before parliament voted it. The House had now no information that could warrant them in granting extraordinary supplies; they could not even guess whether ministers intended to keep Malta and the Cape of Good Hope, or to surrender them; and therefore could form no opinion about the probability of immediate war.

The *Lord Chancellor* replied, that the present bill was not for an extraordinary supply, but one of the usual supply bills, brought in at the beginning of every session. He contended, that public notoriety was a sufficient ground for parliamentary proceeding: he could not pretend to state positively, the words used by any other of his majesty's ministers: but he could positively say, that he never was of opinion that the peace was an advantageous one; but it was still better than continuing the war without object or possible advantage.

The bill was read a first time.

Dec 15. On the motion, that the bill be read a second time,

Earl *Spencer* addressed their lordships at considerable length, on the ground that he had before touched upon. His objections to the establishments, for which the supply of the year was to be voted, were reduced to three heads; first, he objected to the manner, as being to be raised without that communication from the crown to parliament which was usual and necessary; secondly, he objected to the extent of these establishments; for if it was necessary to have 130,000 soldiers, besides our militia and volunteers, 50,000 seamen could not be sufficient; and his majesty's ministers were blameable in reducing the number from 70,000 to 50,000; thirdly, he objected to the probable application of such a force from a firm conviction, that the present administration had not sufficient judgment and energy of character, to use it to advantage. At a time when France was every day extending her empire and her resources, ministers had disbanded our army, and diminished the nnmber of seamen. He agreed perfectly with a noble friend of his, that in an administration he looked to the men, as well as the measures: as to meas ures, every body would allow, that buying a good gun was a good measure for the defence of a house; but it was an important consideration to whom that gun was entrusted. If we were at sea at a time of impending danger, it would be well to hear that the ship was sound; but it would be full as important to hear that the pilot was skilful.

The Earl of *Suffolk* condemned the conduct of the late administration in the whole of the war; and praised that of the present administration, whom he thought deserving of the confidence of the nation; and who should therefore receive his support. He alluded to the conduct of the late administration, with respect to confining persons for a long time, whom they suspected of treasonable practices, but whom they never brought to trial.

The *Lord Chancellor*, with great warmth, declared, that he would sooner suffer death upon the spot, than hear the conduct of the late administration aspersed upon that head without confutation. If it was criminal, he was as deeply criminal as they, and the only reason for pursuing a different conduct now was, that the country was under different circumstances. He also approved of the conduct of the late administration during the war, and had always supported it: the peace

Digitized by Google

had been approved of by that great character, whom the opposers of the bill had so highly extolled (Mr. Pitt), and he was much surprised to hear the same noble lords, who so highly admired that exalted character, express opinions so very different. With respect to the present situation of Europe, he felt as an Englishman must feel, but would consider it inconsistent with his duty to give any detailed information upon the subject.

The Earl of *Carlisle* said, his principal objection to the establishment proposed was, that it was to be voted altogether on the credit of the minister; which was a degree of confidence not to be found on the records of parliament. He was not guided in his opposition by any paltry motive of obtaining place or power; but if in the hands of other ministers, the ambition of Buonaparté was likely to receive a greater check; if the tone and spirit of the country were more likely to be supported under the management of men of greater talents, and of more elevated minds; he must wish to see the government of the country in the hands of such men. He therefore voted against the bill.

The Earl of *Darnley* expressed his doubts, whether such a force as had been proposed, could be safely trusted in the hands of the present ministers; he considered the ambition of Buonaparté to be so gigantic, that he would never be satisfied till he forced the doors of the Bank of England with his legion of honour, and planted his flag upon the tower of London. Against such an enemy, this country should employ its ablest ministers.

Lord *Hobart* denied that government had compromised the honour of the country, either in the affair of Switzerland, or in any other respect. He stated, that a greater force than that which was now demanded had been entrusted to ministers in 1801: he complained that some noble lords who had promised an active and zealous support to the present administration, had, on the contrary, honoured them with an active, constant, and zealous opposition; which increased in proportion as they gained the confidence of the public.

The Duke of *Norfolk* expressed his surprise at the opposition of some members of the late administration, to the present measure: the person who was at the head of that administration, resigned his situation at a period which called for the exertion of his great talents. He was sure that the conclusion of peace had given general satisfaction; and that the majority of the nation wished for its continuance. He concluded by declaring his confidence in the present administration.

Lord *Grenville* commenced an animated speech, by denying that he or any of his noble friends wished to stop the supplies: they wished, that according to parliamentary usage, a message might be sent from his majesty to the House, to inform them of the causes for which an increased supply was necessary. Such a message might be sent down the next day, and then there would be no delay in passing the bill: at present the House was ignorant whether the establishment proposed was for peace, for war, or for preparations of war. There were abundant precedents of the line of conduct which ought to have been pursued. George 1st did not hesitate to tell his parliament in the first speech from the throne, after the conclusion of a peace, that that peace was insecure and precarious. In such a case, parliament knew what they were about, in voting the military establishments. As to a charge of inconsistency brought against him and his friends, he must reply, that he supported the present ministers as long as he could approve of their conduct. It was not till after the convention with Russia and the peace of Amiens, that he found himself obliged, in honour, to withdraw that support. After those events, he had no confidence in the wisdom of their councils. He did not wish to pry into the arcana of government; but he, and every noble lord who heard him, was constitutionally entitled to those communications which had been heretofore uniformly made. The power of France had, since the peace, been regularly increasing; while that of this country had been impaired. He had a right to ask ministers the reason of this change of system, or to infer that they were acting on a most unwise and impolitic system. He considered the idea of waiting for the changes which time might bring about, as completely ridiculous.

The *Lord Chancellor* expressed his regret, that ministers had lost the confidence of the noble lord. Were he at liberty to declare the circumstances which governed the conduct of ministers, in the measures they had adopted, he was convinced the noble lord would agree with

Digitized by Google

him, that they were influenced by the best considerations for the prosperity of the empire.

Lord *Pelham* rose for the purpose of replying to some points of lord Grenville's speech. He thought, that if in his lordship's opinion, the present ministers were so unworthy of confidence, it would have been his lordship's duty to go further than in making speeches in opposition; he ought to have moved an address to his majesty for their removal. He had never coveted office; he assumed it with no other view than for the service of his country, in a critical and awful period. He acted to the best of his judgment, and did not wish to hold his situation a moment longer than he enjoyed the confidence of his country. He concluded by stating that no charges of incapacity in ministers could be a reason for not passing the present bill.

Lord *Minto* agreed in the objections that had been made by other noble lords to votes of supply, or their being offered to the House without the usual information. He strongly suspected that the honour of the country had been compromised with respect to Switzerland. He believed it was after a remonstrance made on the part of this country, that Switzerland was invaded; and yet ministers never gave any information to parliament upon this subject, though often asked for it.

The bill was then committed.

Protest against the Malt Duty Bill.] Dec. 15. The following Protest was entered on the Journals:

"Dissentient,

"Because the constitutional argument which was urged for suspending the grant of any supply, until the accustomed communication had been made from the crown to parliament, rests on two propositions drawn from the law and usage of parliament and from the very essence of the British constitution.—First, that no grant of supply can in any case be made to the crown, except in consequence of a previous demand for aid. And secondly, that such demand must not only describe the general services for which the aid is asked, but must also specify whether those services are calculated on an expectation of peace or of war, or of preparation for war.

"These two propositions have been invariably adopted in the practice of our constitution. No instance has yet been alleged in which they have ever been violated, except in the present case, and their maintenance is essential to the discharge of all our most important duties. If parliament can alone decide upon the amount of the supply to be granted, it is obvious that parliament must be informed of the extent and nature of the services which that supply is to defray; a question which must always essentially depend on the probability or certainty of peace or war.

"For the solution of this question we are now referred to public notoriety alone. We answer, that the constitution of our country entitles us to more authentic information; that such is the course which the law and usage of the parliament have established; and that, unless the uniform practice of our ancestors be adhered to in this respect, we can neither satisfactorily regulate our own conduct, nor judge as we ought of the measures of government.

"But we deny that any notoriety as to the point in question does in fact exist. The dangers of the country are indeed sufficiently notorious; but parliament is yet to learn by what system of conduct the king's government proposes to avert or to encounter those dangers. The determinations of the ministers, as far as we know them, have been uncertain and fluctuating, their councils undecided, their measures inconsistent, and their language contradictory. We are called upon to provide for an establishment large beyond all former example; but we have not yet been distinctly told, not even in debate, much less in the constitutional way of communication from the throne, what is the purpose for which it is intended to provide—whether this be a peace establishment calculated to last until the power of France be reduced or her ambition satiated; or whether it be a measure of temporary preparation which is to apply to some actual pressure, or to support some depending negotiation; or lastly, whether it be intended to meet the imminent danger of immediate war, and to resist the continued growth of that power which hourly threatens our own destruction.

"In this situation, yielding to no men in duty, loyalty, and attachment to the crown, and feeling more anxious for the immediate adoption of all practical means of defence, in proportion as our sense of the impending danger is greater, we are

Digitized by Google

still desirous that some short interval and pause should take place before the final grant of any supply; though we desire that such interval should be no more than will be sufficient to enable his majesty to show to us the same gracious confidence which his majesty and his royal ancestors have reposed in all preceding parliaments, and to place us in a situation in which we may, without violating the constitution of our country, cheerfully concur in granting to his majesty all such aids as the present exigency of affairs does, in our opinion, peculiarly demand.

(Signed). "SPENCER.
"GRENVILLE.
"MINTO.
"CARYSFORT.
"CARLISLE."

Debate in the Commons on the Naval Commissioners Bill.] Dec. 13. Captain *Markham* rose to call the attention of the House to the subject of an inquiry into the abuses of the navy. He began by vindicating the late administration of that department from the reproach of not having put a stop to these abuses. They had instituted an inquiry, and many reports, ably drawn up, had been presented on the subject; but their attention had been so engrossed during the course of a long and laborious contest, that it was impossible for them to find leisure to pursue, as they wished to do, a system for the correction of these abuses. The bill which he should move for leave to bring in, would proceed on the same principle as that which they had then in contemplation and would have in view the naval department only. Its great and only object was the public utility. Besides, the board of Admiralty did not possess the necessary powers for prosecuting such an inquiry with effect, as they did not possess the power of examining witnesses upon oath, or of calling for papers and records which might be indispensable for a satisfactory inquiry into the subject. This object could be adequately attained only by the appointment of a commission named by parliament, and vested with all the requisite powers for bringing to light the irregularities and abuses complained of, and for devising the most effectual means of correcting and preventing them in future. The hon. gentleman concluded by moving for leave to bring in a bill to that effect.

Earl *Temple* thought that some specific grounds should have been adduced to justify the House in granting the power which the bill called for. The general assertion, that abuses existed, did not warrant the House in granting such powers. The navy board already possessed the powers that were necessary, and those powers might be transferred to the Admiralty.

Lord *Hawkesbury* contended, that it was not the object of the bill to confer any new powers upon the Admiralty, but merely to appoint a commission to put into execution those they already possessed.

After a short conversation, leave was given to bring in the bill.

Dec. 17. On the motion for re-committing the bill,

Mr. *Canning* said, that if the Admiralty had not sufficient power to correct the abuses which they had detected, he would rather give additional powers to that board, because it was an existing, known jurisdiction, than create this new tribunal. It had been said, that the board of Admiralty itself was to be subordinate to this commission; but he did not believe that this was the object of the bill; for though there was a clause making the Admiralty in some respects subordinate to the new board, yet it was enacted in another clause, that this new tribunal was to derive all its information from the board of Admiralty. When the bill had gone through the committee, time should be allowed to parliament to consider the subject. He saw no objection to its remaining till after the recess.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that if abuses did exist, no time ought to be lost in detecting them; if the House were of opinion that they did not exist, the bill should be rejected altogether. It would be recollected that these commissioners were only empowered to inquire, not to punish; and parliament had, in fact, in the year 1792, pledged itself to make such inquiry when peace was finally restored.

Admiral *Berkeley* could not perfectly approve of the persons appointed for commissioners with such extraordinary powers; for (excepting sir Charles Pole) he thought that they, though very respectable men in their own particular line, were not sufficiently acquainted with the persons or things with whom they would have to do.

Mr. *Sturges* objected to this bill, as

Digitized by Google

having for a principal object, to extract confession of guilt from the delinquents, or punish them for perjury; this was contrary to the spirit of our constitution.

The *Attorney General* expressed his surprise at the new career of opposition, which gentlemen had embarked in. It was perhaps the first time, when ministers had called for an inquiry into abuses, that such inquiry was resisted by opposition.

Dr. *Laurence* thought that the bill was in opposition to an excellent principle, which had been laid down, that no man should be compelled to give evidence of his own delinquency: he thought it was the duty of the Admiralty to punish the delinquents when they found them out; but he did not approve of commissioners being now appointed, to overhaul every transaction of the late war.

After some farther conversation, the bill passed through the committee.

Dec. 18. On the motion, that the bill be now read a third time, lord Folkestone moved, that instead of the word "now," the "8th of February be inserted."

Mr. *Lemon* said, he considered the bill as an *ex-post facto* measure, and consequently unjust. He was apprehensive it would have the effect of overturning the rules of evidence.

Mr. *Courtenay* said, that not an hour should be lost in discovering and checking those frauds and corruptions which were generally admitted to exist. It was a bill recommended by a man who had added new lustre to the British flag, and whose name would shine with distinguished brilliancy in the naval annals of Britain. It had been objected, that the bill was retrospective. Certainly, it necessarily must be so; it was to discover frauds that had already taken place; a prophetic bill to discover frauds before their existence, could only be conceived by those who made the objection.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that every inquiry must, in the nature of things, be *ex-post facto*. It was an inquiry into abuses that have past, in order to prevent their recurrence.

Mr. *Kinnaird* approved of the principle of the bill, but disapproved of the means made use of for correcting abuses. He had moved for the patents, to see what powers they contained. He would maintain, that they contained an injunction from his majesty, directing the Admiralty to inquire into the abuses complained of. He thought that, by taking away the duties of the greater offices, such as the bill proposed to do with respect to the Admiralty, and instituting an intermediate power between them and parliament, the responsibility was proportionably diminished. He would rather say give to the Admiralty Board additional powers, and make them responsible to the House. He regretted to see the House departing from its usual jealousy with respect to the influence of the crown, by the opening for its members new sources of employment.

Mr. *Sturges* observed, that much had been said of the great achievements of the noble earl at the head of the Admiralty, in which he was ready to concur; but he felt himself obliged to state, in justification of his own conduct, that he thought that noble earl's management, since his accession to office, not entitled to confidence, particularly when he recollected that he had brought two deserving officers to trial upon charges from which they were honorably acquitted. This was one reason for the jealousy he entertained of the proceedings of the Admiralty. He contended, that such parts of their conduct as had obtained popularity, were merely in the pursuance of the plans and recommendations of their predecessors.

Mr. *R. Ward* said, that in Keble's Reports there existed an account of the origin and powers of a commission appointed in the reign of Charles 2nd to inquire into a misapplication, under his majesty's authority, of money granted by the Commons for the expenditure of the navy. In the patent the commissioners were authorized to commit persons refusing to own the authority of their inquiry; so that those persons should stand committed without bail or mainprise. As the commission was intended to act with an inquisitorial and checking power in some sort against the king himself, the precedent could not be regarded as unduly hostile to the liberty of the subject. How, then, could gentlemen oppose this bill, on the pretence that the powers which it went to grant were novel and unconstitutional?

The *Attorney-General* said, he had not heard the slightest reason assigned for postponing the bill. It was therefore obvious, that gentlemen were fighting merely for the triumph of protracting a measure, against which they had been unable to assign any solid objection.

Earl *Temple* reprobated the practice of

Digitized by Google

imputing improper views to gentlemen who opposed ministers. If it was resolved to press this measure, he wished to know whether the gentlemen nominated in the bill had signified their intention of accepting the office of commissioners, and also how far back it was proposed that they should go in their inquiries; whether they were to examine the abuses of the navy in the reign of James the 2nd.

Mr. *Sheridan* concurred in the sentiment of the noble lord, that it was improper to ascribe unworthy motives to any member; and that declaration, he ironically observed, came with peculiar grace from the noble lord; for he not only professed respect for the principle, but regard for the practice. The present ministers were, according to that noble lord's assertion, weak, incapable men: they were a milk and water composition, a mere mawkish mixture; but there was no personality in all this! When ministers stated that the bill was suggested by the report of the committee of finance, the noble lord denied the assertion, and charged them with using false pretences, but there was no personality in that! It was all consistent from the noble lord! The necessity for this bill was so glaring, that he was surprised at the objections that were made to it; when it was considered that the peculations committed in the naval department, for the last ten years, amounted to three millions a year. An hon. gentleman had stated that this would be an *ex-post facto* law; but how was it to be otherwise? A similar objection had been made to a similar proposition, in the reign of queen Elizabeth; and the answer of lord Burleigh was particularly applicable. That noble lord said, "If I lose my purse on the road, where am I to find it? why, by going back, to be sure." The purpose of this bill is to go back to the frauds that have been committed upon the public, and not merely to punish the defaulter, but to recover, if possible, the money we have lost. He heartily approved of the bill: its object was, the reform of abuses; and when such a signal was given from the main-top-mast of the Admiralty, he trusted it would be attended to in all the other departments of administration.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington*, in answer to two questions put to him by a noble lord, said, he did not know whether all the persons named in the commission would accept that dignity or not; and this he thought was a proof that ministers had nothing in view but the interests of the country, without any regard to the advancement or emolument of any particular description of persons. Several bills of a similar import with the present had received the assent of the House, in the progress of none of which had any mention been made of the acceptance or non-acceptance of the persons nominated to the commission. Four of the persons appointed to the commission, in the present instance, had notified their acceptance of the charge. The fifth, he believed, was as yet unacquainted with the honour designed to be conferred upon him. With regard to the second question, to what past period the retrospective view of abuses was meant to extend, this was a point that must be left to the discretion of the commissioners.

The amendment was negatived, and the bill read a third time. After which, Mr. Sheridan proposed, in order to guard against the influence of the crown, that in case of any vacancy among the commissioners, his majesty should not be at liberty to appoint any member of that House to supply the place.

This clause was adopted, and the bill passed.

Debate in the Lords on the Naval Commissioners Bill.] Dec. 21. On the motion that this bill be read a second time,

Lord *Pelham* lamented extremely that the noble earl who presided at the Admiralty board was prevented by ill health from attending his duty in that House. Had that not been the case, their lordships would doubtless have heard from the noble earl the reasons which made him think such a bill absolutely necessary. Generally speaking, he entertained great jealousy of every bill of this nature. He did not admire the delegating extraordinary powers to any commissioners whatever. Reposing, however, full confidence in the noble earl at the head of the Admiralty, reposing also a considerable degree of confidence in the House of Commons, and believing that they would not have passed the bill, if they had not been satisfied that the abuses in question could not be effectually corrected without it, he was ready to give his vote for the second reading.

Lord *Nelson* said, that great abuses existed in the navy; and most especially were they practised by the prize agents.

Digitized by Google

Men of his profession found great difficulty in getting their prize money out of the hands of the agents, and often did not get it all. He was sure the legislature was anxious that the poorest sea-boy should receive its protection. The admiral, the commandant of a fleet, or the captain, might find means to obtain their right, but the poor seaman had not a chance of being able to get his money. The bill gave great powers; but they were powers without which the abuses in question could not be effectually corrected; and the hands in which they were to be entrusted were such as were not likely to abuse them. One ground had presented itself to his mind, in which he thought, in the first view of it, great objection might be taken; and that was, the power of calling for merchants books, and by that means getting at all their concerns and connexions. Now, as the credit of a merchant was more precious even than his wealth, he felt some apprehensions lest that credit might, under the operations of the bill, suffer material injury; but as no merchant had made the slightest objection to the bill on that account, his apprehensions had subsided.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, he knew there had been commissioners of public accounts and commissioners on other grounds, from whose diligence and ability beneficial effects had resulted to the public; but even the recollection of that circumstance did not disarm his caution, in respect to the present bill, or convince him that the authorising commissioners to exercise the powers vested in them by it, was the only, or the most effectual means of remedying the evils complained of. The whole of this bill rested upon the assertion of a fact, viz. that certain abuses, frauds, and irregularities, prevailed in the navy, which called for correction. Every man must feel anxious that those sailors who fought our battles should, without delay, vexation, or difficulty, receive the due reward of their valour; but possibly that desirable object would have been better obtained, if a separate commission had been authorized by a bill, for the single purpose of inquiring into the abuses of prize agents. The fact meant to be described in the preamble of the bill might, by one set of men, be termed an abuse; by another, a fraud; and by a third an irregularity. Would it not, therefore, be a more intelligible thing to have divided each of these, and, instead of instituting commissions to inquire into mixed and complicated objects, to have issued different commissions applicable to each of the three heads? One main consideration, under the powers granted to commissioners of any sort was, that the full benefit, not only of the law of England, but of the essential principle on which the existence of that law depended, should be secured to the subject, viz. that no man, whatever had been his conduct, should be called upon to criminate himself. Being a lawyer, he must watch vigilantly over the benefits meant to be extended to every British subject, from this important principle of law; and therefore too much pains could not be taken by their lordships, when they were called upon to pass a bill giving extraordinary powers of examining books and persons to commissioners, to guard against the exercise of those powers being so enforced as to endanger the freedom and security which the constitution intended every individual should enjoy. In the committee he would earnestly apply himself to assist, to the utmost of his power, in making it a safe and salutary bill.

The bill was read a second time.

Dec. 22. The House being in a committee on the bill,

The *Lord Chancellor* proposed the omission of one clause, and the insertion of a *proviso* in lieu of it, in order to secure to the persons called upon by the commissioners to answer, that principle of the common law which gave every man a right to refuse to answer, if his answer either criminated himself, or had a tendency to criminate him. He was aware that parliament had, in cases of aggravated abuse, gone beyond this bill, and, in the case of the South Sea business, thought it necessary to compel the parties interrogated to confess their guilt. But in the case of the present bill, which was not intended to operate as a bill of punishment, but merely as a bill of inquiry, there was no occasion for departing from the sacred principles of the common law of England.

Lord *Ellenborough* said, he thankfully received the noble lord's clause, because he agreed completely with him as to the propriety of its adoption in the present instance; but he trusted parliament would never think itself warranted to part with the right in flagrant abuses, to compel the offender to reveal the guilty secret that lay lurking in his bosom. The enor-

Digitized by Google

mous frauds in respect to the public, which had come to his knowledge while he held the office of attorney-general, made this declaration necessary.

The bill then went through the committee.

Debate in the Commons on the Bank Restriction Bill.] February 7, 1803. Mr. Chancellor *Addington* rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to continue, for a time to be limited, the act which prohibits the issue of specie from the Bank. It was with the utmost reluctance he submitted this proposition to the House, but the reasons which suggested it were too strong, and the necessity too urgent to be resisted. That necessity, however, he hoped, would soon disappear; and, notwithstanding the opinions which had gone abroad, anxiously looked forward to the day, when the Bank would be at liberty to resume its payments in specie. As to the grounds upon which the expediency of the restriction originally rested, he did not now think it necessary to discuss them, still less did he think it necessary to enter into any inquiry respecting the sufficiency of the Bank to answer all the demands upon it. When such an inquiry was before instituted, the case was novel, and therefore to satisfy the public mind was proper and necessary. But what was the result of that inquiry? Why, it removed even the possibility of suspicion as to the circumstances of the Bank. He was confident that at this instant there did not exist in any quarter a doubt as to the solidity of the Bank; of course that could not now become a fit subject for inquiry, though it might be very strongly insisted on as an advisable preliminary to the motion he meant to propose. He observed, that many persons who originally condemned the order of council which produced the stoppage of the Bank, and who disapproved of the parliamentary proceedings which followed, were yet at a subsequent period, from a sense of duty, adverse to the idea of suffering the Bank suddenly to resume its operation. Such was the case in the last session, when some of those gentlemen concurred in the propriety of continuing the restriction, because the course of exchange was against this country. A similar reason prompted him on this occasion to move for a still farther continuance of this restriction. At present, the state of our exchange with Hamburgh was at par—with Amsterdam it was unfavourable. If then our disadvantageous situation, with regard to exchange, was last session considered a sufficient argument for this measure, he would appeal to the House, under the present circumstances of the country, when no influx of bullion from the continent could be immediately looked for, whether it would be expedient to allow the restriction to cease? He would also ask, as it was found necessary to permit the issue of country bank notes, whether the sudden issue of cash from the Bank would not produce a run upon the country banks, and a consequent run upon the Bank of England, which might be productive of the most serious consequences. From these considerations, he would rather submit to the inconvenience of continuing the restriction even longer than might be actually necessary, than risk the consequences of setting aside that restriction too soon. From motives of precaution, therefore, he brought forward this measure. He did not mean to underrate the inconveniencies which resulted from the stoppage of the Bank, but he would maintain that it was better to endure those inconveniences, than to expose the country to the effects which were likely to arise from prematurely removing the restriction. He hoped, however, the period would soon arrive when the progressive advancement of our commerce would produce such a steady inclination of the exchange in our favour, as would enable us with perfect safety to permit the Bank to resume its payments in specie. The causes of the present state of exchange, a very little reflection would explain to the House. The scarcity of the last three years had made it necessary for us to purchase a vast quantity of grain on the continent, and for this purpose not less than twenty millions of specie had been sent out of the country. When, then, such a drain as this, arising from a cause which was not likely soon to occur again, was combined with the drain of cash for the payment of our army and navy, it would be obvious that we should wait the operations of a flourishing commerce, to bring back some proportion of this vast amount of bullion, before we attempted to permit the Bank to issue specie. Upon these grounds he felt himself justified in proposing, "That leave be given to bring in a bill, to continue an act of last session, for continuing the restriction on payments of cash by the Bank."

Digitized by Google

Mr. *Tierney* admitted, that though originally hostile to the stoppage of the Bank, he thought that the peculiar circumstances of the country last session, rendered it inexpedient to take off the restriction; but those circumstances no longer existed, and he therefore objected to the motion without some previous inquiry respecting the Bank. He did not now intend to give any opinion whether the restriction ought to continue, or to be abolished altogether; but he wished to impress upon the House the propriety of previous inquiry. The right hon. gentleman, indeed, had mentioned the state of the exchange; but was the House to have no other information but from his speech? How few were the members of that House, whose habits or connexions gave them an opportunity of knowing any thing about the exchanges? Of the necessity of a committee of inquiry to satisfy the public mind, he was firmly persuaded; but though it appeared to him highly desirable, yet he would not wish to provoke a debate if the sentiments of the House did not seem to coincide with his own. If they did, his proposal would be to pass the bill for two months, and to appoint a committee in the interim, to consider how far it would be proper to continue the restriction farther, or to discontinue it altogether. No other ground was laid for the present motion, but that the exchange with Hamburgh was at par; and upon that naked fact it was proposed to do away the right of the public creditor to convert bank-notes into cash. He trusted the House would not adopt this monstrous bill at a time when there was no plausible pretext for it, when no money was likely to go out of the country, when no alarm prevailed in either domestic or foreign politics, when no fear of any sudden press on the Bank could be entertained. The Bank directors ought to show that there was no danger in their responsibility. They could not be afraid of a run upon them, for who could now think of any material advantage from hoarding gold? They should not plead any little expense or trouble which might occur in procuring bullion, if they want it, as a reason against accommodating the public by paying their own notes, particularly after the vast sums they had put in their pockets. The public had a right to say to them, "You have been for the last six years reaping a productive harvest from our inconvenience; we only ask of you now to convert into cash the notes for which we have given you credit so long," and the Bank ought to be provided to answer this reasonable request. They could have no apology for declining it, unless incapacity: and he did not suppose that to be the case. No director could dare to say, at a time when trade was flourishing, profound peace prevailing, and no alarm whatever appearing, that the exchange being at par would be a sufficient ground for the motion before the House. He exhorted the chancellor of the exchequer to allay the opinions which were afloat. Several factions agitated the public mind, and each had their literary advocates. One of these advocates, in defence of the system of his party, had lately written a pamphlet, entitled, "The Iniquity of Banking," and another immediately replied in a pamphlet, entitled, "Guineas an useless Incumbrance." Perhaps it would be very prudent in the House to step in between these disputants, and by the report of a committee set the public mind at ease. Something ought certainly to be done to put an end to a measure which injures our credit in the eyes of foreigners, and distracts the course of pecuniary dealings in our own country.

Mr. *Fox* began by observing, that if the right hon. gentleman felt the reluctance he had expressed to bring forward the present proposition, much more urgent reasons than those he had heard should, in his opinion, be adduced in its support. If, however, necessity called for its adoption, he was not disposed to object to it: at the same time, he should feel more satisfaction if there were laid before him sufficient grounds to justify his assent; and in that view he concurred with the hon. gentleman who spoke last, in thinking that some inquiry should be instituted into the causes of the continuance of the restriction, that it might appear whether they were of a nature to render the restriction necessary or not. The principal grounds on which the continuance of the suspension now seemed to be rested, were the state of the exchange, and the small quantity of bullion that of late had been imported. Was it then to be understood, that whenever the state of the exchange was so unfavourable as to leave no room to expect the importation of bullion, a restriction should be put on the cash payments of the Bank? Such a mode of reasoning would, on the face of

Digitized by Google

it, go to establish it as a general axiom, that in all such cases the cash payments of the Bank should be suspended. To these reasons were added the great exportation of specie for corn, and on account of other circumstances connected with the war. If these additional reasons had any force, then the propriety of farther continuing the restriction should not be made to depend so entirely on the state of the exchange. Perhaps even it might happen that the unfavourable turn of the exchange against this country might be owing to the very restriction on the Bank; and as on this head doubts were entertained, that with him was a strong reason for inquiry, because a proposition for such inquiry might bring forth many opinions on the subject, more especially of commercial men, and of the directors of the Bank, whose pursuits and occupations enabled them to throw most light on such subjects. It was not into the conduct of the directors that the House should be anxious to inquire. They professed themselves to be ready to renew their payments in specie, if government had no political reasons for preventing them from doing so. They were ready even now to resume their cash payments; and if they, as bankers, saw no danger or inconvenience in resuming them, was it not incumbent upon the House to inquire into the grounds of the political objection that was opposed to that resumption? For his part, he could not conceive a possible case where the restriction could be necessary or useful, when the directors declared themselves to be able and willing to pay in specie. If such a case existed, it should be made out. When the Bank directors expressed no reluctance to recommence their payments in specie, must not the worst inferences be drawn, even from a suspicion that circumstances were such as to make it imprudent to suffer them to resume their payments? The House must recollect how closely the credit of the Bank was connected with the credit of the country, and how much it therefore must depend upon the management of the Bank. The credit of the country was not likely before to be much affected by that management; for, while the Bank continued to pay in specie, if the directors chanced to act improperly, the public were able to discover the impropriety of their conduct in the consequences to which it must have given rise; but now, as there was not the same check on them as that by which other bankers were bound, the public had no longer the same security, and the whole of the credit of the country was made to depend upon the administration of men whose conduct was under the control of government, and who owed no responsibility to the country. When the public credit was so endangered, it was not surprising that an impatience should be expressed to get rid of the restriction; at all events, he must hope that a short bill only would now be proposed, and that time would be allowed to examine how far it should be prolonged. It might also be proper to inquire how far the state of exchange should be admitted as a criterion whether the Bank should pay in specie or not. Allowing also that there might be some danger in taking off the restriction altogether, still might not some arrangement be adopted for paying a small part of the dividends and notes in cash? By adopting a gradual system of that kind, all danger from a sudden run might be avoided. But it is said, if the Bank renews its cash payments, the specie will be sent out of the country—that is very probable; but as long as there is a strong temptation to send guineas abroad, the most rigorous laws, even when most vigilantly enforced, will prove inadequate to prevent it. Neither can it be expected that the Bank Directors will serve the public at their own loss. They will not buy bullion that the public may have money, they will not lose in purchasing it, that others may gain by sending it out of the country. But with regard to the fluctuations in the state of the exchange between this country and others, there was a circumstance which now occurred to his mind, if he rightly recollected it, which tended to show that the state of the exchange does not always depend on the circumstances which are now supposed almost solely to affect it. In 1772, or 1773, when there was a great quantity of bad money in the country, the course of exchange was then also much against us; but when in the room of this adulterated money good gold was substituted, the consequence was, that the exchange turned almost immediately in our favour. As long as our currency continued bad, the exchange was against us; so is it now, because paper is not much better than bad gold; or, it is attended with the same inconveniences. May it not therefore be expected, that as, in the

Digitized by Google

former case, when our currency was meliorated, the course of exchange turned in our favour, so also, if the Bank now resumed its cash payments, the same favourable circumstances might attend the change? This was a matter that well deserved to be inquired into. There were many other points to which an inquiry might be usefully directed, and he should not be sorry to see a motion made for instituting one.

Mr. *Bankes* felt rather undecided how he should act on the present occasion. If it was intended that the bill should go beyond a very short period, the dignity of the House and the security of the public credit might require that some investigation should be made into the unnatural state in which imperious circumstances had, for some time past, placed the Bank. Since peace was now restored, and those circumstances no longer continue to operate, the House should be slow in acceding to such a measure, as that now proposed, without very satisfactory grounds to justify them in adopting it.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that the only question now before them was, that leave be given to bring in a bill. When it came to the stage for filling up the blanks, then an opportunity would occur to discuss the time to which its operation should be limited, and to advance the reasons why a committee of inquiry should be appointed. Gentlemen seemed to imagine that his right hon. friend ascribed the necessity of the measure solely to the state of exchange. Now, his right hon. friend, in stating his opinion of the measure, looked back to the necessity which justified it at the time it was first proposed, and to the salutary consequences which its adoption had produced; and in that view he could not but applaud it as a wise precaution; but looking at it now generally and abstractedly, he could not but regard it as an evil, and he therefore felt anxious for the arrival of the period when the cash payments might be safely resumed. He entertained nearly the same opinion; but what added to his embarrassment was, the difficulty of taking off the restriction after it was once imposed. His right hon. friend had observed that the restriction had been continued for many years, without any inconvenience having resulted from it; and this he was ready to ascribe, to the excellence of the institution itself, and to the prudent conduct of the gentlemen who administered its affairs. If, therefore, no inconvenience has as yet accrued from the restriction, would it not be wise to pause awhile, and look for the period when the removing of it may be attended with as little danger as possible? The noble lord then enumerated the causes why the course of exchange was against this country, and why the quantity of its bullion was diminished. A great quantity of it was known to have been sent abroad, not only for the purchase of corn but for the maintenance and use of the army and navy. The exportation of our bullion was then a matter of necessity; for the exchanges were with regard to us reduced extremely low: but they are now improved, and may soon be expected to be at par. If, therefore, any inconvenience still remains that may be likely to arise from a premature change of system, is it not proper to look forward to a period when no obstacle may impede it? It was not upon any prospect of an unfavourable change that the present measure was grounded, but rather the delicacy of reverting to the old system without taking the advantage of a favourable moment. That moment was perhaps at no great distance, and prudence admonished, that it should be waited for with patience. As to the appointment of a committee of inquiry, he objected to it, chiefly because its only effect would be to create alarms that might be extremely prejudicial. The appointment of such a committee might be necessary if any doubts were entertained of the sufficiency of the Bank; but on that point the most perfect satisfaction had already been afforded. It might perhaps be proper, at a future period, to revise the whole system of our paper credit, but then that should be done merely with relation to that system itself, and without any reference whatever to the institution and conduct of the Bank. An hon. gentleman has observed, that in 1778 the course of exchange was against this country when our gold coin was of an inferior value, but that immediately after the recoinage, it turned round in our favour—but the fact is, that at that period the exchange was against us only in appearance, in substance it was in our favour. No inference can therefore be drawn from that circumstance, that restriction on the Bank is the cause of the unfavourable turn of the exchange, or that the exchange would turn in our favour, if that restriction were taken off.

Sir *F. Baring* observed, that circumstances wholly unnoticed or unattended

Digitized by Google

to might have occasioned the unfavourable turn of the course of exchange against this country. Formerly, its fluctuations might be accurately calculated; but the commercial as well as the political frame of Europe, was so dislocated and disjointed, that nothing now could be calculated to a certainty. The disadvantages we now laboured under did not arise from common causes, but from extraordinary and unexpected efforts to cramp and to counteract our commercial enterprises. Our credit, however, was never safer or sounder than at the present moment, and the measure proposed was one of propriety, not of necessity.

Leave was given to bring in the bill.

Feb. 12. The House being in a Committee on the bill, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, that the duration of it should be until six weeks after the commencement of the next session.

Mr. *Bankes* urged a variety of reasons why a shorter time should be named; he principally relied on the state of exchange which was at par, and the balance of trade, which was now in our favour: he concluded by moving as an amendment, "that the 1st of May be the day on which the restriction should cease."

Mr. *Princep* supported the original motion, on the ground, that no loss or inconvenience, had been sustained, in consequence of the restriction.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* declared, that if he supposed any considerable number of the reflecting part of the community doubted the sufficiency of the Bank, he would agree to an inquiry: if he resisted it now, it was because he was convinced it was unnecessary. He thought the whole object of the amendment would be accomplished, by declaring that it should be in the power of parliament to repeal or amend the act during the present session. He however had no expectation, that the circumstances of the times would allow it to be so soon repealed.

Mr. *H. Thornton* was fully aware of the great inconvenience which would attend the taking off the restriction. The present was no time for the adoption of such a measure. He at the same time was impressed with a degree of parliamentary jealousy on the occasion. He agreed that the Bank could not with safety be opened, unless the exchange was favourable to this country; but was of opinion that the first favourable season should be taken advantage of.

The original motion was then agreed to; and on the 14th the bill was passed.

Debate in the Lords on the Bank Restriction Bill.] Feb. 22. On moving the second reading,

Lord *Pelham* took a cursory retrospect of the operation of the restriction since 1797, and from that retrospect he thought himself warranted in asserting that no injurious consequences had arisen from it. Of the stability and solvency of the Bank, it was superfluous for him to bring forward any proof. Other reasons called for the continuance of the restriction, more particularly reasons of prudence and expediency. The idea of renewing the restriction at the present moment originated solely with government. Government had had no communication with the Bank, as a bank, upon the matter. It was the general opinion of men best enabled to form correct notions on such topics, that the restriction had proved highly beneficial to commerce. These, in concurrence with other motives, have induced ministers now to propose it anew. They see the course of exchange, which the very large remittances in specie for the purchase of corn in times of scarcity, for subsidies to foreign powers, and for the maintenance of our fleets and armies in distant stations, had occasioned to be so much against this country, now gradually turn in its favour; they see our trade and commerce gradually increasing and swelling into an extent beyond any former example; they have, consequently, just reason to expect that, in a short time, there will be such a reflux of bullion into the country as to make up for the enormous drain of specie. Did not, therefore, sound policy call for a temporary continuance of a measure from which no mischief had accrued, but from which much benefit had resulted?

Lord *King* could by no means agree that any thing like adequate reasons had been adduced for farther continuing the restriction, under the present circumstances of the country. It was a measure which he could not but look upon as a very extraordinary one—a measure that encroached on private property, that violated public faith, and that put the whole monied property of the nation at the mercy of the Bank directors. It was an infringement of the solemn compact

Digitized by Google

which the Bank had entered into with the public when government granted them a charter; and could their lordships precipitately assent to such a measure without such reasons having been adduced for its absolute necessity as ought to enforce the strongest conviction in their lordships' minds? But where were the proofs of that necessity? Did the country now labour under that extraordinary pressure, arising from a variety of difficulties and dangers which were advanced in support of the first adoption of the restriction? On the contrary, was it not confessed to be in a state of the highest commercial prosperity? Where then, could be the urgent necessity of its renewal? what would be the effect of it, but the encouraging of an enormous issue of paper, which raised the price of every article, and must continue to keep the state of exchange unfavourable to us? To prove that such must be the effect resulting from such a measure, the noble lord entered into a variety of comparative statements of the course of exchange at different periods. According to these statements it appeared, that from the time the restriction was first imposed, the course of exchange began to turn against this country in various proportions to the quantity of paper in circulation. Previous to the laying on the restriction, the Bank seldom issued notes to more than the amount of 10, 11, or 12 millions; but since that period, they issued to the amount of 15 and 16 millions. Hence the rise in the price of bullion; for it was justly remarked, that in proportion as paper was plenty, and therefore cheap, gold would be scarce, and consequently dear. The average amount of our circulating medium was about ten millions: that had been found fully sufficient to answer all the purposes of the country. When, therefore, an unnecessary addition was made to it, of one, two, or three millions, there was a depreciation in the value of paper in the same proportion. But it was not merely on account of the inconveniences arising from the measure that he objected to it: he objected to its principle, and to its being drawn into a precedent, which, he feared, would be the case whenever it might suit the convenience of ministers or the Bank; and thus parliament might be called upon not only to confide implicitly in ministers, but also to place the same confidence in the directors of the Bank.

The Earl of *Moira* perfectly concurred with the noble lord, that, when the Bank issued paper to an extraordinary amount, their notes must suffer a depreciation, and the price of bullion must also rise in proportion. Gold was not sold for gold, but for paper; and its price would always be in proportion to the greater scarcity or plenty of paper, or to that against which it was exchanged. He wished to direct their lordships attention to the compact, in which the Bank was bound towards all those who had intrusted their money to their integrity. Was a compact so sacred lightly to be trifled with? Look at the facility which the Bank might afford government for the issue of exchequer bills; the Bank might be screened on one side by the continuance of the restriction, and be tempted on the other by the superior advantage of buying up government paper of that description. Indeed, when this motive for the renewal of the restriction occurred to his mind, he discovered a quality in the transaction which rendered it altogether uncongenial to his mode of thinking, and he was sorry that ministers had advanced no plausible argument to do away that unfavourable impression.

The Earl of *Westmoreland* contended, that the present question had nothing to do with the stability of the Bank, or the expediency of the original restriction. These points were long since satisfactorily settled. The only question now was, with regard to the expediency of removing, at the present moment, a restriction, the beneficial effects of which have been already fully experienced. At the time when the restriction originally took place, the expediency of the measure did not originate from any idea of the inadequacy of the Bank to answer every just demand, but was the result of an extraordinary and unaccountable alarm, which gave rise to an unusual demand. It never was the intention of the establishment of the Bank that there never should be an issue of paper greater than, at a moment's notice, could be covered by an issue of cash. This, indeed, would be completely contrary to the very nature of such an establishment. It was only necessary that the funds of the Bank should bear a full proportion to the demands for which they might ultimately become responsible. That the resources of the Bank were completely adequate to every demand was questioned by no one, and therefore the question of continuing the restriction was simply one of expediency. On the

Digitized by Google

principle of expediency, the restriction began in a moment when an extraordinary alarm was excited; and it was proper that when the Bank resumed its cash payments, no extraordinary demand should be created by precipitating the measure. Delay could be productive of no disadvantage, while a hasty renewal of the restriction might involve the Bank in very serious inconveniencies.

Lord *Auckland* said, it was not on the state of exchange that he rested his support of the continuance of the restriction. A consideration of much greater importance determined his judgment; this consideration was derived from a view of the state of the country in its relations with foreign powers. He would offer no decided opinion on the probable period to which the continuance of peace might extend. Ministers, he doubted not, would omit nothing in their power to preserve a good understanding with foreign states; but it was impossible to determine how far their exertions might be successful. Before the expediency of discontinuing the restriction on the payments of the Bank could be established, it was necessary to wait to see how far there was a prospect of the durability of peace. Already the course of exchange was assuming a more favourable appearance, and the continuance of peace could not fail to increase this advantageous operation. In the view of a permanent peace, our financial prospects were of the most flattering kind, and it was agreeable to every principle of policy and expediency to wait for the operation of this financial prosperity before the restriction was precipitately withdrawn. He called the attention of the House to the very large drain of cash from this country for the last ten years. He produced calculations to show, that, during the few years previous to the original restriction in 1797, this drain had not amounted to less than 48 millions; and, including the drain which, from a variety of circumstances, had taken place during the last six years, the whole could not be estimated at less than 120 millions. Under such circumstances, policy required that the restriction should not be withdrawn till the operation of our financial prosperity began to be more fully experienced in the influence which it would necessarily produce in giving an advantageous turn to the course of the exchange, and the influx of bullion which it would create. In illustration of this position, his lordship laid before the House a calculation of the amount of the annual revenue, contrasted with the expenditure. The former he calculated at 34 millions, and the permanent charges at 25 millions, leaving for the ordinary expenses of the year a surplus of nine millions.

Lord *Grenville* said, that whatever the period of peace might be, and in his opinion it might be of very short duration, he trusted the revenue of the country would be raised to a degree fully adequate to meet the expenditure; and that no speculations would be formed on views of the surplus of the revenue above the expenditure, which might ultimately be found delusive. His lordship placed this part of the subject in a very striking light; but declined any minute discussion, till the subject came regularly before the House. The state of the finances was one of the deepest interest: and he felt no ordinary degree of anxiety, that a subject so intimately connected with the salvation of the country, should be fully understood.

Lord *Sheffield* said, he had not heard any argument which, in his opinion, could justify the risk of abandoning the Bank restriction at a crisis such as the present; nor had he heard any well-founded suggestion that mischief or inconvenience could arise from the continuance of it at this time. He conceived that neither the expediency of the original measure, nor the state of the finances of the country, were the question before their lordships. The difficulty and delicacy of removing the restriction were foreseen at the time of imposing it; and as the difficulty, in consequence of the present very precarious state of Europe, is still greater than was expected, it cannot be thought prudent to hazard the relinquishment of the restriction just now, without some obvious necessity, or perhaps, till there is an influx of specie into this country. Notwithstanding all that had been asserted, he insisted that paper money had not been depreciated, nor had coin borne a premium in this kingdom, which he conceived to be the true criterion by which we should judge of the matter; for, when paper money is not depreciated, we know there is not too great an emission of that kind of currency; and he was disposed to consider a judicious increased issue of it as very advantageous, inasmuch as it enabled us better to carry on the great commercial transactions of this country;

Digitized by Google

and if the event has helped to prove that immense quantities of gold coin in circulation are not absolutely necessary, this measure which we now regret, may in some degree become serviceable, by preventing hereafter, unfounded alarm on such a subject. Scotland has improved in every shape, with scarce any coin, and has been greatly benefited by a plentiful issue of paper money; and we find that great quantities of coin or bullion give little public credit to France or Spain; and consequently it may be inferred that coin has little to do with public credit: and, in truth, the necessity of having immense quantities of gold and silver in an unproductive state, in those two countries, arose from the want of public credit. Holland, when she flourished most, depended almost entirely on her bank; and countries truly commercial, such as England and Holland, could not have carried on their extensive trade by any other means. A very great proportion of the wealth of England would be in an unproductive state if it were necessary to have a coin currency for all its commercial transactions; and without a plentiful issue of paper currency, we could carry on but a small part of our present trade. He scarcely comprehended the suggestion, that the unfavourable exchange against this country took place in consequence of the Bank restriction. It did not take place immediately on the adoption of that measure: even since that time, during a certain period, there has been a great influx of gold, and the exchange has latterly become much more favourable during the existence of the restriction. It was perfectly easy to account for the unfavourable exchange, by the great remittances to the continent; and, more especially, in return for the immense importation of grain, the value of which was twenty-four millions in little more than two years; or, on an average of ten years, we have imported, of foreign corn, which we might have raised at home, to the value of at least four millions yearly—not far short of the ordinary real balance of trade in our favour. As the importation of foreign corn diminished, the course of exchange became proportionably more favourable to us. It therefore seemed reasonable to suppose that the immense payments for foreign corn consumed more than the balance of trade in our favour; and it may be observed, that the payments for a very extraordinary importation of corn, in consequence of the scarcity of 1796, drained this country so much, as to become a principal cause of the Restriction act in the spring of 1797: so that instead of imputing the unfavourable exchange to the restriction, we must place it to its proper account, our own neglect and bad policy. We suffer quibbling objections to prevent a general enclosure and cultivation of the waste lands, and we neglect to remove the great discouragements to tillage. We do not give ourselves the trouble to examine our corn laws, which have been altered much for the worse within the last thirty years.

The bill was read a second time.

The King's Message respecting the Situation of the Prince of Wales.] Feb. 16. The Chancellor of the Exchequer brought down the following message from his majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His majesty having taken into consideration the period which has elapsed since the adoption of those arrangements which were deemed by the wisdom of parliament, to be necessary for the discharge of the incumbrances of the Prince of Wales, and having adverted to the progress which has been made in carrying them into effect, recommends the present situation of the prince to the attention of this House.

"Notwithstanding the reluctance and regret which his majesty must feel in suggesting any addition to the burthens of his people, he is induced to resort, in this instance, to the experienced liberality and attachment of his faithful Commons, in the persuasion that they will be disposed to take such measures as may be calculated to promote the comfort, and support the dignity of so distinguished a branch of his royal family. G. *R.*"

Ordered to be referred to a committee of the whole House.

The King's Message respecting Military Preparations in the Ports of France and Holland.] March 8. The Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered the following Message from his majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His majesty thinks it necessary to acquaint the House of Commons, that, as very considerable military preparations are carrying on in the ports of France and Holland, he has judged it expedient to adopt additional measures of precaution for the security of his dominions: though

Digitized by Google

the preparations to which his majesty refers, are avowedly directed to colonial service, yet, as discussions of great importance are now subsisting between his majesty and the French government, the result of which must at present be uncertain, his majesty is induced to make this communication to his faithful commons, in the full persuasion that, whilst they partake of his majesty's earnest and unvarying solicitude for the continuance of peace, he may rely with perfect confidence on their public spirit and liberality, to enable his majesty to adopt such measures as circumstances may appear to require, for supporting the honour of his crown, and the essential interests of his people. G. *R.*"

Ordered to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

Debate in the Commons on the King's Message respecting Military Preparations in the Ports of France and Holland.] March 9. The House having resolved itself into a committee on the King's Message,

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* rose and said:—I rise, Sir, to propose an address to his majesty on the subject of his gracious message; and I feel perfectly convinced that his majesty's appeal to the wisdom and to the public spirit of this House, will not have been made in vain. There are two points to which his majesty particularly refers; the state of the military preparations now going on in the ports of France and Holland, and the important discussions now pending between the governments of the two countries. Either of these points, Sir, would separately be ground for vigilance and circumspection; conjointly, they not only require vigilance and circumspection, but they further lay the foundation for such preparations as may be sufficient to meet any emergency to which circumstances may give rise. His majesty has stated distinctly that these preparations are ostensibly for colonial purposes. This is certainly declared to be their distinct object, and I hope it will be found that it is their real purpose. But when it is recollected what important discussions are now going forward between the government of this country and France, and what an intimate connection there may be between the issue of these discussions and the preparations to which his majesty's message alludes, it is impossible to determine how far armaments ostensibly, and perhaps really, prepared for one object, might be directed to another. With respect to the discussions referred to, it will not be expected that I should particularly refer to the points which are the subjects of dispute, or say any thing of the state to which those discussions have now arrived. I have, however, great satisfaction in stating, that there is reason to hope that these disputes will be amicably settled, on terms consistent with the interest and the honour of both countries. But, Sir, if unfortunately these expectations shall be disappointed; if the hopes which are entertained of an amicable adjustment shall prove too sanguine, and the renewal of hostilities shall become the only alternative consistent with our independence and our honour, I assure the House, that every communication which can throw light on the subject, and enable the House to form an opinion of the conduct which government has thought proper to pursue, will be unreservedly produced. As to the measures to be adopted, in consequence of the message, this is not the time for me to enter into any explanation. His majesty, by bringing forward the message, expresses his desire that some augmentation should take place in our naval forces. It is also expedient that means should be taken to augment our means of internal security. With respect to the latter, our obvious policy is, to have recourse to that constitutional force, the militia. In the situation in which the country is now placed, I am confident that public men will make up their minds to the necessity of considerable privation. I beg, however, that what I have said may be clearly understood. I desire that nothing of what is stated in his majesty's message, or what I have now mentioned, shall be construed into an idea that the preparations which circumstances require have any reference to offensive operations. I wish to be distinctly understood, that the preparations which are recommended in his majesty's message solely relate to measures of defence and of precaution. On this day I am anxious that unanimity should mark our proceedings. In the address which I shall propose I am anxious to have the concurrence of gentlemen of all descriptions in this House. Whatever may be their opinions of men and measures; whatever may be their sentiments of the policy of concluding the peace, or of the nature of the terms on which it was

Digitized by Google

concluded; whatever may be their ideas of the comparative advantages of continuing the war, I am convinced that the address which I shall conclude with moving, is one to which they cannot in reason object. I shall now move, "That an humble address be presented to his majesty, to return his majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious message: to assure his majesty, that his faithful Commons are fully sensible of the fresh proof which his majesty has thus afforded of his unceasing attention to the welfare of his people: that under the circumstances which his majesty has been graciously pleased to communicate, they cannot hesitate to concur with his majesty in thinking it expedient to adopt additional precautions for the security of his dominions: that though the preparations, to which his majesty refers, are avowedly directed to colonial service, yet, as discussions of great importance appear to be subsisting between his majesty and the French government, the result of which is at present uncertain, his majesty's faithful Commons, whilst they partake of his majesty's earnest and unvarying solicitude for the continuance of peace, will, with the utmost chearfulness, support his majesty in the adoption of such measures as circumstances may appear to require, for maintaining the honour of his majesty's crown and the essential interest of his people."

Mr. *Fox* said:—I have no intention to oppose the motion, at least in its present form. I have only one observation to make; and that is, that no vote was ever required from the House under circumstances of more utter darkness than the present. The proposal is, that "an address be presented to his majesty, stating, that the House concur with him, that under existing circumstances additional precautions are necessary to be adopted. The right hon. gentleman then states, that he trusts no one can refuse his assent to the present motion. Certainly not; no person can deny, that after the message yesterday received additional precaution is necessary and proper. The right hon. gentleman stated, that there were two points in his majesty's message, and that each of these was a sufficient ground for involving the country in war. Little was said by the right hon. gentleman respecting the fact, that preparations are carrying on in the ports of France. On the discussions that are subsisting between the government of this country and that of France he dwelt for some time. But not the smallest hint was dropped by him respecting the subjects to which those discussions refer; whether they relate to Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, we are left totally in the dark. When his majesty states these discussions to be of the utmost importance, I, without hesitation, believe the assertion; but certainly it might reasonably be expected, that when we are called upon to afford his majesty the means of additional defence, we should be informed of the particulars that render such additional defence necessary. This address has no other meaning whatever, than that the Commons are ready to support the honour of the crown, and the essential interest of the people—most certainly they are, and it is upon this ground solely that my vote is now given in its favour, not pledging myself to support the measures that may be adopted in consequence of existing circumstances. His majesty's ministers would do well to consider seriously the tendency of their measures. If through their negligence, rashness, or ill-concerted plans, they involve their country in war at this important period, I shall pronounce the present administration to be the most fatal and destructive that ever directed the affairs of Great Britain.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said:—The message and the address refer to two objects the preparations going forward in the ports of France and Holland, and the discussions pending betwixt this country and France. The hon. gentleman seems to conceive, that my right hon. friend stated that either of these taken separately would have been a sufficient ground for taking the measures of precaution to which the message refers. Now, this is not exactly what my right hon. friend stated: he declared explicitly that either taken separately would have been a ground of circumspection, and that united, they required something more; that they called on ministers to advise his majesty to send a message to the House, recommending measures of additional precaution. With respect to the address I allow that it does not pledge the House, or any individual member, to the opinion which he may hereafter give on the subject of the disputed points referred to in his majesty's message; and I have no difficulty in assuring the House, that if, unfortunately, those discussions shall terminate in a

Digitized by Google

renewal of war, it will then become the duty of ministers to lay before them every degree of information that can guide their judgment of the conduct of ministers during the negociation in question. But I even go further and say, that it will then become our duty to bring before the view of the House and the country documents to explain, not merely those points which were immediately depending, but the whole of our conduct, from the conclusion of peace up to the present moment. On a deliberate review of the whole of that conduct, there is not one atom of it which I see reason to repent of.

Mr. *Windham* said, he agreed with Mr. Fox, that, by the measure now proposed, the House was placed in rather a hard situation: because he did not think it was sufficient to be told, that hereafter they should be put into possession of the grounds of the present procedure. He was of opinion that the House ought to have been enabled to form a judgment, when measures of so serious a nature as the present were proposed. The House at present literally knew nothing. From the period of signing the definitive treaty, now a twelvemonth ago, and though another considerable armament was called for, yet no information had been afforded. He therefore must, for one, enter his protest against the mode adopted by ministers. The force now proposed to be got in readiness was stated to be merely a defensive force. But he thought it was proper to know whether such a force as that about to be raised ought not be considered as fit to be used prudentially, either as a defensive or an offensive force? Undoubtedly, every force at first must be considered as being of a defensive nature; but what he wished to know was, whether the right hon. gentleman meant that this force was of a nature only capable of being used as a defensive force? He felt very doubtful of the propriety of ministers placing the House in the situation in which it at present found itself; at the same time that he concurred in the propriety of what had been advanced, that by the present address the House pledged itself to nothing specifically. An hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox) had said, in the perfect spirit of all his policy for these ten or fourteen years past, that peace was his first object. Be it so. But from the present want of information the House was completely at a loss to determine whether peace or war was necessary. He hoped it would not be thought that the opposers of the peace of Amiens would be the foremost to propose the renewal of hostilities. The very reverse would be found to be the legitimate result of the principles they embraced, for in proportion as they had opposed that peace, it must be unlikely that they should with for a renewal of the war; inasmuch as one of the grounds of their opposition to that peace was, that the terms of it would put the country out of a condition to go to war again. Therefore no person holding those opinions could contemplate a renewal of the war without serious alarm. He would not, however, indulge that feeling so far as (like the hon. gentleman, Mr. Fox) only to view the evils of war. For the tendency of that hon gentleman's opinion, that war was an evil with which no other stood in comparison. But he apprehended this country might be brought into such a situation as to be led to perceive the danger of peace as well as of war; and that we might go on as rapidly to destruction in a time of peace as in a state of war. Under this impression he could not say that the scope and tendency of the right hon. gentleman's unqualified opinion met with his entire concurrence. He rather wished to take out the sting of his concluding observation, whilst he ventured to tell ministers, that they were not only to regard the responsibility of making war, but the responsibility also of not making a proper peace. He only begged to mark the fact, and advance the position, that ministers were equally responsible in both respects.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he should have been well content to have given his silent vote of approbation, but for some expressions in the speech of the right hon. gentleman who had just sat down. The right hon. gentleman had appeared to-day in a state of unusual anxiety to deprecate the idea that he, and those who had thought and acted with him, because they had been avowedly hostile to the peace, should now be otherwise considered than as the men the most zealously disposed to maintain it. Nay, the right hon. gentleman had maintained, that those who had condemned the peace on his principles were peculiarly entitled to the credit of being the persons now most reluctant to the renewal of war. He would not pause to examine the consistency of this claim; but he called on the House to look at the argument set up this

Digitized by Google

day. We that opposed the peace, said the right hon. gentleman, must be presumed to be the persons most reluctant to renew the war; because our strongest argument for condemning the peace was, that it left us no means of future hostility. But he went further; for he declared that even if our existence as a nation was the question, the peace had left us without ability to meet the contest! Was this language to hold at such a moment as the present? He had heard, indeed, that the first consul had modestly proclaimed to the vassal thrones of Europe, that England was no longer able to contend single-handed with France—but he did not expect to hear this sentiment re-echoed and acquiesced in by a member of the British parliament. Whatever were the motives of that new reluctance to war which seemed so suddenly to have seized the right hon. gentleman, his reluctance could not be more earnest and sincere than his own was. He deprecated war from every feeling of his heart, and every suggestion of his reason. He adjured ministers to try what temper, what conciliation, what even concession, without forfeiture of honour, could do; but if all these, sincerely attempted, should fail, and the dire necessity of renewing the war should be forced on us, he would not endure for a moment to be told, that the energies of the country were so exhausted that we had no course left but submission. No; he trusted, in spite of the audacious boast of the first consul, that it would be manifested to him, and even to the right hon. gentleman that there were still left spirit and resources in British hearts, not merely to protect the existence of the country, but to avenge the slightest insult upon its honour.

Mr. *Canning* gave his cordial support to the address. He was unwilling to suppose that ministers, in the conduct of the discussions were exposed to censure. He wished to suspend his judgment till they had an opportunity of explaining to the House the circumstances of their conduct. The House were assured, that if the discussions should terminate in hostilities, ministers would feel it their duty to explain the whole cause of the negotiation. But no assurance was given of this explanation in the event of an amicable adjustment. The House, however, had as clear a right to explanation in the one case as in the other. A refusal to give such an explanation would be a striking evidence of the want of that good understanding which ought to exist betwixt the people and the government. Alarm and anxiety were excited, and the grounds were carefully involved in obscurity. He should, however, support the motion, putting in his claim to demand a full and satisfactory explanation.

Mr. *Grenville* defended Mr. Windham, from the perverted comment, which had been made upon his speech this evening. He supported the address, but, at the same time, thought the effect of it was much weakened, by its not touching the political opinions of any member of that House, or pledging them to any specific measure.

The *Attorney-General* defended the line of conduct, which ministers had taken, from the objections which had been made in the course of the debate.

Dr. *Laurence* expressed himself friendly to peace, but if, upon due information, war was necessary, he should cheerfully vote the supplies for conducting it with energy.

The address was agreed to *nem. con.*

Debate in the Lords on the King's Message respecting Military Preparations in the Ports of France.] March 9. The order of the day for taking his Majesty's Message into consideration, being read,

Lord *Hobart* rose to move an address to his majesty on the occasion. He thought there could not be a difference of opinion, when his majesty had communicated to them, that great military preparations were actually making on the coasts of France and Holland; and that important discussions were pending between him and the French government; the result of which was very uncertain. It was the earnest wish of ministers, that the tranquillity which subsisted between the two countries, should not be interrupted: and he relied upon it, that the country would enable them to preserve it, consistently with the honour and interest of the nation. He then moved an address, which was nearely a recapitulatiou of the message.

Earl *Spencer* rose, not to oppose the address, as he had been always a friend to vigorous measures. He rejoiced to find, that ministers were at length sensible, they had gone the full length of concession and negotiation: that they were now determined to act a manly part. There

Digitized by Google

was no other chance of saving the country but by showing the first consul, that we are not afraid of meeting France single handed, and that rather than suffer the smallest particle of the national honour to be tarnished, we were ready to re-commence hostilities. He should wish however to know, whether the discussions alluded to in his majesty's message, were new or of a long standing?

Lord *Grenville* said, he perfectly agreed in opinion with the last noble lord. He rejoiced at this first instance of sound political wisdom in his majesty's present ministers: they had seen the consequences of a system concession and meanness; and he hoped they would act with due energy and perseverance in that now proposed. The reasonings of this day, were warranted by the experience of the last eighteen months, and he therefore cordially assented to the motion.

The Earl of *Moira* delivered a very animated speech in support of the address. He wished, however, to be satisfied, that sufficient cause existed for this appearance of energy; this sudden change in the conduct of his majesty's ministers. He hoped it was not a mere bravado, intended to cover some farther concession. The communication which had been made, had created a very general alarm, and materially affected those who had property in the funds. He hoped ministers would be able to show at a future day, that they had not done this unnecessarily. He wished ministers would speak out, and not be afraid of offending the first consul of France: as for his part, he had no notion of talking longer with compliment towards this new Hannibal; who had sworn on the altars of his ambition, deadly and eternal hatred to the interests and prosperity of this country. If we would consult our most immediate interests, and uphold our national character; we must show that man that we are not to be intimidated, by the menace of consequences. We must, in the language of our immortal bard,

"Be stirring as the time, be fire with fire;
"Threaten the threatener, and out-face the brow
"Of bragging horror!"

We must boldly look our danger in the face; and be prepared to meet it in its worst form.—No man could more sincerely wish for peace than himself; no man regretted war more as a great calamity; but constantly to submit to the domineering arrogance of an implacable rival, is positive ruin, to which war in its worst shape was preferable. He considered that an uniform, consistent, manly tone, might prevent war, by throwing all the blame upon the transgressor; and there was no man, however great his power, that was independent of public opinion; and above all, of the opinion of the people he governed. Whoever considered the history of the man who now governed France, would not consider attempts impracticable, because they are difficult. We should prepare our minds for an attempt upon this country. If it could only produce mischief and confusion, the person at the head of France, is the man who would coolly calculate upon the total destruction of an army, to accomplish a mighty mischief. But when he said that England was not able, single handed to contend with France, where did he get his information? Was it from the noble lords near him, whom he was proud to call his friends? (lords Nelson and Hutchinson) or at what period of our history was it, that he discovered England was not able to grapple with France? Should the enemy land, they would undoubtedly push for the capital; and certainly a pitched battle would be fought, which should end in the destruction of one army or the other, before he should be permitted to reach it. He concluded by exhorting ministers, in a very forcible manner, to make a common cause with the people, in the defence of their common country.

Lord *Auckland* said, it was a matter of serious inquiry whether this great measure had been advisedly taken. After the most deliberate investigation of every circumstance that had come to his knowledge, he was free to declare, that the present measure was likely to produce the blessings of a secure peace. He never had beheld the peace of Amiens in a sanguine point of view. He saw the whole line of coast in the hands of the French, from Italy to the Elbe, with the single exception of the rock of Gibraltar; and from the first moment of the conclusion of that treaty, he had seen no sign of the French government being disposed to tread in the paths of peace. This had been his view of the peace from the beginning; and he owned he was in dread that, with the projects of the most unbounded ambition in their hearts, the French might have succeeded in lulling Europe into a

Digitized by Google

fatal security, and that they would not have been roused to a sense of their danger until France had matured her plans, and consolidated her means of carrying them into effect. Providentially this had not been the case. An early exposure of their designs had seasonably alarmed this country, who could not be inattentive to the arts by which the French disorganised all the states of Europe. He was sure he need not expatiate on the policy of this regard to neighbouring states. He never could admit that our interference in the affairs of Europe was an unwise policy for England. On the contrary, it was our duty to interfere whenever we could do it with effect. Ever since the treaty of Amiens the French government had shown a disposition to under-rate our resources, to agitate the public mind in England, to affect our credit, and to misrepresent our condition. He wished to declare to France, and to the world at large, that if we were forced to the renewal of hostilities, we possessed the means, both of offensive and defensive operations. We had at this time the appropriation of 17,000,000*l.* a year of an actual and efficient revenue, over and above the sum applied for the discharge of the interest of the national debt. Our revenue would very soon amount to 34,000,000*l.* sterling. When the French learnt these facts, they would not only respect our inexhaustible sources, but hesitate before they provoked us to warfare.

The motion was agreed to *nem. diss.*

The King's Message for calling out the Militia.] March 10. The Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered the following Message from his Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"In consequence of the preparations carrying on in the ports of France and Holland, whilst important discussions are subsisting between his Majesty and the French government, his majesty thinks it due to the care and concern which he feels for his faithful people, to omit no means in his power which may contribute to their security.

"In pursuance, therefore, of the acts of parliament enabling his majesty to call out and assemble the militia of the United Kingdom, his majesty has thought it right to make this communication to the House of Commons, to the end that his majesty may cause the said militia, or such part thereof as his majesty shall think necessary, to be forthwith drawn out and embodied, and to march as occasion shall require. G. *R.*"

Debate in the Commons on Voting an Additional Number of Seamen.] March 11. The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, Mr. Garthshore moved, "That an additional number of 10,000 men be employed for the sea-service, for eleven lunar months, to commence from the 26th Feb. 1803, including 3,400 marines."

Mr. *Francis* rose and said:—I have no doubt, Sir, that the vote for an immediate augmentation to the navy will pass, as it ought to do, with perfect unanimity. I not only concur in it heartily, but, if a greater force had been proposed, I should not have thought it liable to objection. But, before we come to that conclusion, there are many important considerations which demand the attention of the House. On some of these points I wish to submit my thoughts to the House, declaring only, that they are not hastily adopted, that they are founded in sober reflection, as much as I am capable of giving to any subject, and that, in delivering them now, I act upon the strongest conviction. When the address in reply to his majesty's message was moved, I, for one, should have been better satisfied if it had been voted at once, as it were by acclamation, without debate or conversation of any kind. For, though the little that was said, was not at all in the way of opposition, and was thoroughly understood among ourselves, I know to what misconstruction it may be liable abroad, particularly in France. I say this the rather because the short debate that did occur produced no effect, and answered no purpose. They, who expected explanations from ministers, got none, and went out of the House no better informed than when they came into it. On that day there was no subject for deliberation. It was not, it could not be a question, what sort of answer we should return to such a communication from the throne. Neither this House collectively, nor any individual in it, need be told by ministers, that that which is our essential interest, is also our greatest duty, to unite with his majesty against any hostile aggression whatsoever, in defence of the safety of the country, in which our own is included. We do not want any pompous ministerial phrases

Digitized by Google

about loyalty, and attachment, and unanimity, and such like, to make us sensible of our duties, or to animate us to perform them. The emergency itself, without any other consideration, is full enough to engage every heart and hand in the nation to join in its defence. The cause is common to every man in Britain. It is necessity as well as duty. In fact we have no choice. The part of this duty which relates to his majesty has been performed. We have promised him our cordial support; and here I think we ought to pause and consider well, how far it may be proper for this House to permit ministers to include themselves, as undoubtedly they will if they can, in that promise, and to what degree their conduct entitles them to a share in it. On this day the House returns to its deliberative capacity, one of the first objects of which should be, to weigh well what is past, in order to judge well of what is to come, the state we are in, from what causes, and by whose mismanagement. They who stand in the situation that I do, with respect to the present ministers, I think have a right, rather more than others, to try their conduct by its effects, and to see whether, on a fair view of the result of their administration, they have a just and rational claim to our future support. Out of this House I have given them all the assistance, little as it is, that such an opinion as mine could carry with it. In this House they have had my concurrence and vote in the measures they have recommended for precaution and security. The question now is, whether the confidence, so far reposed in them, ought or ought not to be continued. To them personally I have no sort of objection. For some among them I have great personal regard; to none of them the smallest sentiment of ill will. I am not their competitor; it is not possible I should be their enemy. But this is no time for compliments. Considering the state in which the country stands at this moment, and which, in the first instance, I must impute to those who have had the management of its affairs, these gentlemen appear before this House and their country, I will not say as criminals, but as men in the highest degree accountable for their conduct. This is not the language of reproach or offence. It is strictly parliamentary, and I have a right to hold it in this place.—I shall now state, as shortly and distinctly as I can, the grounds of my first opinion, and why I have changed it. When the preliminaries were signed, and long before the articles were made public, I joined sincerely in the universal exultation which prevailed through the country, with very few exceptions, on that event. I was grateful for it, because it was a deliverance from the war. The country rejoiced at the peace, because it was peace, or they thought it so. I gave the ministers full trust that, in settling the definitive treaty, they would take care that, whatever the conditions might be, the peace itself would be real and secure. When the terms were known, considerable objections were made to them, and certainly not without reason. Still, Sir, I felt no disposition to canvass or object to the terms, considering them always as an equivalent yielded for the sake of obtaining with certainty in return a most important and most desirable object.—On this point I wish to state an opinion, which I have not taken up without due consideration. It leads to the same conclusion, and unites with other motives for not censuring or even examining the terms of a treaty of peace, except for some collateral purposes, which I shall presently mention. As long as it is in fact received and acknowledged as an established principle of the constitution, the truth of which I do not now mean to assert or deny, that the right of making treaties of peace is vested solely and exclusively in the crown, there can be no right in this House or any where else to try or to pass judgment on the merits of the terms, I mean always as a compact agreed upon with a foreign party. *Factum valet.* You have resigned all authority, you have abandoned all jurisdiction over that question to the executive power. In these transactions, the king is representative and agent of the nation, fully authorized to treat and conclude without appeal to any other tribunal. You cannot alter an iota in the articles agreed on, and therefore, if you had the right in question, it would be in vain to make use of it. In some other senses, undoubtedly, it is the right and the duty of parliament to examine the conduct of ministers in these transactions, and to call them to account, if the case should appear to require it. If you have reason to suspect treachery, you have a right to inquire for the purpose of punishing. If you suppose incapacity, you have a right to inquire for the purpose of removal. On your own principles you have no other. By the definitive treaty

Digitized by Google

at Amiens, it did certainly appear, that great concessions and sacrifices had been made to France and her allies; but these I still considered as a price paid in one way for value received in another, and though the purchase might be dear, still the thing we bought was worth paying for even at that high rate. Well, Sir, when we had made all the concessions, when we had submitted to all the sacrifices, and paid the full price of a solid and secure peace, and much more than the full price as some persons think, have we obtained it? Is that the fact? No, Sir, the contrary is self evident. It appears now that all that his majesty's ministers have gained by their treaty, has been a hollow truce, a short cessation of arms, and war to be resumed at a greater expense and under greater disadvantages than if it had not been discontinued. They have parted with the pledges that were in their hands, and they have taken no security from the enemy. What explanations they may give hereafter, or whether they ever will give any, we know not. At present, the whole transaction on the face of it exhibits no proof of wisdom or ability. Then comes the question to the mind of every thinking man, in a prudential view; and without looking to direct crimination, is it rational, is it safe to commit the conduct of the war to the same persons, who have so poorly and lamely managed the transaction of the peace? Even in a pacific negotiation, it is no inconsiderable disadvantage, if they, who negotiate for you, are personally undervalued by the opposite party. Sir, we know not to what issue the present circumstances may lead us. I am far from thinking that England is not equal to a contest with France, especially in a cause which must and will unite all men. Availing ourselves wisely of our natural defences, and of the weapons that peculiarly belong to us, I am convinced we are more than equal to the task. Still, however, our situation is serious, and not at all fit to be trusted to weak councils or feeble hands. Within these few days, we have seen enough to judge of the further effects which a declared war will immediately produce. The sudden fall of public credit, with all its consequences to the general property, the repose and happiness of the country, is no light matter. As these effects continue to operate, they grow and increase until at last they cannot be endured, especially by a people who have so much reason to think that their affairs have been palpably mismanaged. There is one consideration more, which indeed deserves the attention of the House, as much as any other. With that I shall conclude, and leave it to the reflections of men of greater authority and knowledge, than I can pretend to, to weigh the consequence. The country is surrounded with difficulties, exposed to distresses, and possibly approaching to a contest for its existence. In this awful situation, whether I advert to some who are present, or to others who are absent, the melancholy and astonishing fact is, that out of the councils and government of the country, at such a moment as this, all the eminent abilities of England are excluded. In fair weather, a moderate share of skill may be sufficient. For the storm, that seems to be coming, other pilots should be provided. If the ship sinks, we must all go down with it. In so great a common danger, I cannot trust to the conduct of imprudence, proved by experiment, merely because imprudence is not criminal.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington*:—Sir, the hon. gentleman professes a desire that nothing which fell from him might be considered as designed to disturb the unanimity which prevailed when this subject was formerly before the House. Now, Sir, I ask, if prudential reasons existed which rendered any explanation inexpedient on a former evening, whether, acting on the same principle, his majesty's ministers ought now to give that explanation? The hon. gentleman has said, that at a crisis when we may be called upon to contend for our very existence as a nation, it is a matter of deep regret that the whole ability of the country is excluded from his majesty's government. I will readily allow for myself, and I believe I may make the same avowal for my colleagues, that we feel in their utmost extent the arduous duties which we are called upon to perform, and are sensible of the responsibility that we owe to the country. This, Sir, may be a very fair subject of observation to the hon. gentleman; but, on what principle is it that this gentleman, who tells the House distinctly, that a ministry enjoyed his confidence from which the whole ability of the country is excluded, should now bring forward against them the charge of weakness and incapacity? I leave the hon. gentleman to explain the reasons for withdrawing the confidence which he for-

Digitized by Google

merly reposed.—The hon. member has accurately laid down the principles by which the declaration of peace or war is regulated. This declaration is wisely made to rest with the chief magistrate. If, however, a peace inconsistent with national honour and safety is concluded, I admit, that his majesty's confidential servants are deeply responsible for the advice which they have given to their sovereign. The hon. gentleman has applied the general doctrine to the present situation of the country; and has argued, that if by the misconduct of ministers the country has been brought into its present perilous situation, they are responsible for this situation. To this sentiment I explicitly assent.—But, Sir, I aver that no advice has been given respecting the discussions now depending betwixt the two governments, which was not founded in the true spirit of peace. It was solely with the view to the continuance of peace that additional preparations have been recommended. I do not mean to dispute the ultimate right of the House to a full and fair explanation on this subject. I contend, however, that it has not a constitutional right to demand explanation at a moment when explanation would essentially injure the advantages which government might derive from existing discussions.

Mr. *Dent* said, he had heard various reports as to what was the cause of these discussions and armaments. But whether the object was Malta, or Egypt, he did not wish to pry into objects which ministers had thought fit not to disclose. He thought them entitled to his confidence, and gave it accordingly. There was one point, however, which he could not help lamenting; which was, that we had now come to the eve of war, when we had given up almost every conquest; and had returned several thousands of seamen to France. In the fullest conviction of the propriety of the measure, he should move "That instead of 10,000 seamen and marines, 25,000 be inserted in the vote now upon the table."

Mr. *Fox* said:—I cannot help feeling some degree of surprise at the language which my hon. friend who began the discussion, and the chancellor of the exchequer have used respecting the conversation which took place on the motion for the address. I myself began that discussion; but I do not feel that I was guilty of bringing out a single sentiment which could produce a feeling of animosity in France, in this country, or in any other part of Europe. My hon. friend is unwilling to negative the present motion, though he is desirous of an explanation of the grounds on which it is proposed; and the right hon. gentleman is surprised that this explanation is demanded, when my hon. friend expresses his readiness to vote for even a much larger number of seamen, if such a number were necessary to the public service. I am, Sir, as ready as any member to vote for the proposed addition of seamen, on the principle that they are necessary for the public service; but I have at present no better ground for my vote than if 25,000, 100,000, or any other number had been proposed. My objection rests on this plain, constitutional ground, that as representatives of the people, in the proper discharge of our duty, we have a right to have the causes of these increased preparations explained, and not be called upon to vote on the unlimited confidence which we choose to repose for a time in ministers. I have always understood, that the prerogative of the crown to conclude a peace was clear and undisputed; and I agree with my hon. friend, that those who have counselled his majesty to conclude any peace are responsible for the terms of that peace. I cannot however allow, that after the peace has been concluded, and after its terms have been canvassed and approved, if circumstances occur which render the continuance of peace impossible, ministers are to be necessarily accused of having, by their conduct, produced these circumstances. With respect to his majesty's right of declaring war, there is as little doubt in theory; but in practice a very important distinction exists. In this declaration might be involved every principle of a free constitution, every thing connected with the property, nay, the very existence of the subject. The sovereign might be ill-advised, and experience has proved that this is not merely a possible case. The country might be plunged into a war, of which it would be impossible to see either the equity or the necessity. It might be continued against the will of the parliament or the people, and the whole, or part of every man's property might be wrested from him, if in practice this prerogative of the crown were carried to all the extent which theory supposed. But, Sir, such a construction of the preroga-

Digitized by Google

tive strikes every one in a moment as monstrous; and while in theory we admit the power of the sovereign to declare war, in practice and in substance we possess the privilege by which alone that declaration can be carried into effect. This privilege is founded in the means that we possess of giving or withholding the necessary supplies. This has an operation to the prevention of war to a considerable degree, though it is only the privilege of the purse which we enjoy. This House must therefore be necessarily parties to every war. How, is this to be done? Why, Sir, the mode of our becoming parties is simple. His majesty in all cases states to us the grounds on which he has thought a declaration of war necessary; and he calls upon us to grant the supplies necessary for the prosecution of the contest. We all know, that instances are not wanting in which the sovereign has been compelled to relinquish a war, because parliament, convinced of its injustice and ruinous effects, no longer afforded the supplies. I will not here determine how far the American war was put an end to by the voice of parliament; but there is one striking instance in which a war was put an end to by the exercise of this constitutional power, and that was, the instance in which the parliament of Charles 2nd, compelled that prince to relinquish the Dutch war. Now, Sir, how does the case stand at present? and here I will rest my argument. We know, that in practice, armaments precede any official communication from the throne, or any vote of supply; and I trust that, if danger really exists, armaments are now going on with a rapidity correspondent to the emergency on which they are founded. The certain effect of the vote is only to make us direct parties to any war to which these armaments may be applied. What I object to, then, is simply, that I have heard no grounds stated to justify any extraordinary preparation; and therefore I must, on constitutional principles, enter my protest against the mode of proceeding which has been adopted. The case of the Russian armament is one in which many persons were desirous to pursue a course similar to that now proposed to be adopted; but I do not think that, when the consequences of that armament are considered, the proceeding then adopted will be very likely to encourage imitation. I hope, Sir, I may be allowed to reason hypothetically respecting the independence of parliament in granting supplies for carrying on any war. I trust that we are not necessarily to be constantly guided by a spirit of humble docility, though our independence may appear more clearly in theory, than in any cases of modern or recent experience. In whatever we choose to exercise our constitutional right, the possibility of its exercise will not be disputed. Possibly we might think that negotiation was preferable at a moment when ministers had plunged the country in war; or, on the other hand, we might suppose, that measures of a more vigorous description would have done much more for the national honour than any negotiation; and how is our opinion to be expressed, except in withholding the supplies, before we bind ourselves to become parties to a war? I therefore, Sir, for one, contend against the House of Commons being a mere echo, a mere docile receiver of whatever communication ministers may think proper to make under the form of a message from the throne. I do not wish to flatter ministers, when I say I believe that the preparations which have been recommended are founded on a firm and honest conviction of their expediency. I will not suppose that they would willingly, and without reference to any one object of advantage, take such steps, if they did not imagine that they were essential to the interests of the country. Their interests, as well as their character, equally forbid me to suppose, that in this instance they are deceiving the House or the public. This I have no difficulty in stating generally, though I must add, that instances of the guilt, to which I have now alluded, are not entirely unknown. But let gentlemen recollect, that, with the best intentions in the world, ministers are liable to error; and that what they conceive to be wise and politic, might, if explained, appear unwise and inexpedient. This I must only say, that we are totally without all means of forming any judgment. In the message of his majesty, or in the speech of the right hon. gentleman, there is not a single word stated by which I can venture to form any opinion of the points in dispute.—A good deal has been said, with the view of showing, that if a rupture should take place, it would be only the natural result of the treaty of Amiens. Now, Sir, I am one of those who hold a very different opinion; and

Digitized by Google

without hesitation I say, that if war does now take place, there is no necessity for supposing that it has the slightest connexion with that treaty, or that that was a treaty not fit to be concluded. I thought, and I have seen no reason to alter my opinion, that the treaty of Amiens was an eligible treaty; not eligible compared with other treaties, which under other circumstances might have been formed, but eligible as freeing the country from a most destructive war. Are we to be told, Sir, that ministers dare to make no peace, because the unreasonable ambition of France may now drive us to the renewal of hostilities? Are we to be told, that we were to wage warfare till we had obtained a satisfactory assurance, on the part of the enemy, of a sincere desire to cultivate all the blessings of tranquillity in the true spirit of peace? No reasonable man will, I believe, hold so extraordinary an opinion. It may be further urged against ministers, that since the conclusion of peace, they have acted too much in the spirit of concession. How far this charge is true, I have no means of determining, though there appears no reason to conclude that their disposition to conciliation has gone beyond a commendable desire to preserve the peace. If they have been guilty of such concession as has in the smallest degree compromised the honour or safety of the country, unquestionably their conduct has been highly criminal; but this is no consequence of their having concluded the treaty of Amiens. But, Sir, perhaps we are to be told, that it was impolitic to make peace till we had a vigorous administration to support it. I certainly do not think that want of vigour in an administration is a sufficient reason for not entering into a war, if a legitimate cause of war exists. As an objection to the conclusion of peace, it is one of the most ridiculous and inconclusive that ever was brought forward. If ministers have conceded too much, or done too little, for the support of the honour of the country, they have incurred a very grave responsibility; but let not this be laid to the charge of the treaty of Amiens. If I am fond of that treaty, it is because it was the means of ridding us of incumbrances of the most oppressive kind. Not that it freed us from connection with allies (for allies we had none at the time it was concluded); but that it delivered us from the detestable and abominable principles on which the late war was conducted. I do sincerely hope, Sir, that we shall hear nothing more of wars undertaken for religion and social order. I speak not disrespectfully of religion, or of the blessings of social order; but I speak of that detestable hypocrisy which held forth these as the ostensible objects of contest, while we were all along fighting for ends of a nature totally opposite. I believe that such hypocrisy is for ever destroyed; and I trust, that as long as a detestation of such base and infamous deception shall be reprobated among men, such attempts to impose on a generous people must be held in eternal execration. If, unfortunately, we are to be doomed to a renewal of hostilities, I hope that the object of the war will be clearly and distinctly understood. What are the subjects which may eventually lead to such an unfortunate result, I profess to be totally ignorant. Whether they refer to the possession of Malta, the evacuation of Alexandria, or whatever other point of discussion they involve, I have no means of forming an opinion. I shall just say generally, that if our national rights are involved, if attempts have been made to lower that rank which we have been accustomed to hold among the states of Europe, and if all attempts at amicable adjustment have failed, then I have no difficulty in saying, that a war undertaken under such circumstances would be just. Of the necessity and policy of such a war no man can for a moment doubt. But, sir, I know it is said, that it is necessary to hold out to the people some ostensible object of war beyond what is the real object of contest—without this sort of language the national enthusiasm cannot be animated. This I hold to be a very false and pernicious doctrine. If a war be really necessary, I am convinced that no measure of this sort need be resorted to, to animate the national spirit. False pretensions and high-sounding words do not appear to me to be likely to animate the energies of a people. Nothing so much dispirits a people called upon to make great exertions, as ignorance of the precise object of contest; and this ignorance was one of the leading causes of the evils which the late calamitous contest entailed on the country. After the experience of those calamities, no one would surely wish to go to war for a light object. On this point I shall speak in very plain terms. If war be unavoidable for great national objects, then I am convinced it

Digitized by Google

will be sustained with a corresponding national energy. But, at all events, let that object be fairly and fully defined: do not let us again involve the country in the same calamities which the want of a specific object has already made us so severely experience. The right hon. gentleman has said a great deal of the responsibility which attaches to ministers from their present conduct, and in this I fully agree with him. He has said something of the reproach which he may have to encounter for too great liberality of concession. On this point allow me just to express my confidence, that he will never be induced, by any fear of reproach, to abandon a system of conciliation, so long as it is consistent with honour, and promises to lead to an amicable result. I shall not readily be accused of endeavouring to influence ministers to go to the opposite extreme. But while I am the advocate of conciliation I shall never be the apologist of dishonour. My hon. friend has spoken of the present government as excluding the whole ability of the kingdom. On this point I wish not at present to enter. But I may be just permitted to say, that in the prospect of war, with such a man as earl St. Vincent at the head of the Admiralty, there would be little reason to dread the want of suitable preparation; and the signal naval triumphs of the late war afford us the best grounds to hope for future success. Of the merits of our land forces, no man thinks more highly than I do. I believe that we have officers equal in skill and in courage to any officers in Europe. Of our troops, my opinion is not less favourable. I am convinced, that in any contest in which they might be called upon to engage, they would be found fully to support the character which they have so long maintained. Of what, then, should I be afraid in the event of the renewal of war? Of subjugation to France! the idea cannot, for a moment, be indulged. When, however, I consider the many vulnerable points in our situation, when I take a view of the whole state of the empire, when I look even to our financial resources, though in some points of view their appearance is flourishing; when I take all these things into consideration, I cannot but consider the renewal of war as a most grievous calamity. Though for years we should on every occasion be successful—though every expedition should be crowned with glory, still, prolongation even of a successful contest could not but be infinitely calamitous.

Mr. *Burroughs*, in a maiden speech, said:—Sir, the hon. gentleman tells us, that without a disclosure of the objects and state of the discussions now depending with France, he will not be a party to the resolution before us. The drift of his speech has been, to complain of being left in the dark as to the objects and state of the discussions, and to press ministers for a disclosure of them. The conclusion of treaties, he has admitted to be exclusively within the province of the executive power, and surely it must be obvious, that we should encroach on that province, if we were to call for a disclosure while negotiations are depending. The hon. gentleman tells us, that we are bound to withhold supplies for carrying on war, until we know the grounds and causes of the rupture. But though I concur in that position, I beg leave to remind the committee that we are not at war. We are engaged in discussions which may end in war or may end in peace; and it is to me matter of much consolation that the present proposition of voting 10,000 seamen, is so limited, as to show that it is really for the cautionary purpose stated by the king's message. Can any man, acquainted with the perfidy of the French government, deny the necessity of such a precaution? We did not begin the armament. The French began, and we should be most imprudent to delay following their example. I shall therefore give my support to the resolution.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said:—Sir, I chiefly rise shortly to observe on the doctrine which the hon. gentleman opposite me (Mr. Fox) has endeavoured to inculcate. I perfectly acquiesce with him on the general constitutional principle on which he seemed disposed to ground his observations; and differ with him only respecting the application which he has made of it. No doubt there is a wide difference between the prerogative of the crown, when it is exercised in negociating and concluding peace, and when it is exerted in preparations for and a declaration of war. In opening negotiations for peace, and in concluding them, the exercise of the prerogative is unlimited; though it be competent afterwards for parliament to canvass the nature of the conditions upon which peace has been concluded, and to impeach ministers, and propose their removal from office, if the terms of the treaty betray in-

Digitized by Google

capacity on their part But as the question of war involves a much greater magnitude of difficulties and dangers, so should the House be placed (and in reality it so stands) in a very different posture respecting that momentous question. Most undoubtedly, the hon. gentleman is perfectly justified in asserting that the prerogative of this House in granting or withholding the supplies should be held as sacred as that of his majesty in declaring war; and though the House may not possess a negative on the act of declaring war, yet it most certainly can exert a practical negative on the continuance or the termination of a war, by granting or withholding the supplies necessary to its prosecution. This privilege of the House grows out of the nature of the constitution, and I hold it, with the hon. gentleman, as highly essential to the interests and rights of the nation.—As to the degree of information which, on points like the present, the House is entitled to call on ministers for, I must now offer a few observations. In cases like the present, where the objects in view are not brought to a conclusion, and where measures, simply of precaution, are proposed, ministers may think it their duty not to afford more than what may justify the measure they bring forward. After the circumstances which called for that measure are brought to issue, then, if the degree of information that has been afforded to the House appear insufficient, it is in the power of the House to move an address to his majesty, for the production of more satisfactory information.—The case of war is no doubt, a case which *primâ facie* would justify parliament in calling for all possible information. It is the serious duty of parliament to inquire into the grounds and causes of war, and cautiously to examine whether they be necessary and just. But in a case of peace, although the terms of that peace might not be looked upon as satisfactory, yet the same degree of information respecting the mode in which it was negociated should not be insisted upon. Besides, Sir, the two cases differ materially from each other. The inconveniences that may attend the one, are much greater than what might ensue from the other. In the case of war, those inconveniences are comparatively small; but, in that of peace, after all differences and bickerings were amicably adjusted and composed, how serious might be the inconveniences that would result from exposing to parliament all the irritating circumstances that may have attended the progress of a negotiation, while no one adequate advantage could be expected from an un-called-for revealing of them? Neither, Sir, am I here going so far as to say, that, if peace should be the result, no information should be afforded respecting such an event. I merely contend, that such disclosures should be allowed much to depend on circumstances, much on the nature of the arrangement concluded, and much on the prudence of ministers, respecting what might be proper for them to disclose. These few observations, I imagine, were called for upon the general principle, and the nature of the doctrine which the hon. gentleman has laid down. The House, I trust, will now indulge me in a remark or two upon the application of it; but first I must beg leave to advert to an expression which dropt from the hon. gentleman. The expression I allude to, Sir, is, that in which the hon. gentleman seemed to insinuate, that by the vote given on the question now before the House, the House would be committed to approve a war. I here again am ready to repeat, that the House should not give its countenance to any war, unless it were in complete possession of the grounds on which that war was to be entered on, and thereby be enabled to judge whether it was just and necessary, or otherwise. But neither by the vote of this night, nor by that given on a former night on the question of the address, was the House by any means committed to support a war. Ministers called merely for the means of taking such precautions as prudence might suggest, while negotiations were subsisting, and while preparations were making on the part of one of the powers which, on a contrary issue to that which was earnestly looked for, might be converted into means of hostile aggression. The same information was therefore not to be expected in the case of an armament, proposed under such circumstances, as if it was definitively intended for the resumption of hostilities. The hon. gentleman, in alluding to the Russian armament, seemed inclined to assimilate it to the present case; but the comparison I do not think very just. That was a question upon which a great difference of opinion prevailed, and the hon. gentleman's own reasoning upon it did not

Digitized by Google

well apply to the present measure. Could a war between Russia and Turkey, immediately affect our security? or rather, was not that armament intended to maintain the political balance of power?—If that armament had no other object in view than the maintenance of the balance of power, and was embarked in for political reasons only, then perhaps I might say, let us have no war with Russia for such reasons. There have, however, been times and circumstances, when a mere armament in the ports of a rival power, in the port of Brest for example, though there appeared no adequate reason to suppose it to be intended for hostile purposes, yet I conceive it should induce government to arm; and how could such an armament be prepared without a message from his majesty, such as has been brought down upon the present occasion? If then, in such a case, an armament is judged advisable, how much more expedient, or rather necessary, must it be to adopt a similar precaution, when not only a large armament is fitting out in the ports of a rival nation, but even while to that circumstance is added a pending negotiation of considerable importance? For even, although that armament should really be intended for its avowed purposes, yet if the negotiation ended in a rupture, would the House hesitate to vote the number of seamen now proposed, even as a measure of mere precaution? In that light alone it should now be viewed; nor would the vote of this night pledge parliament to any thing farther. The subject would still be open to inquiry and discussion when farther communications should be received respecting the progress or issue of the negotiation. Now, Sir, let me assure gentlemen, that ministers do not pretend to call for any greater degree of confidence than what the spirit of the constitution usually grants to persons in their situation: a degree of confidence which is generally afforded to government, to whatever hands it may be entrusted; and no greater degree of confidence has any minister a right to demand than what is founded on the opinion parliament entertains of their principles and conduct. As to the proposed amendment, I do not well see how the House can adopt it. It was usual for the House to agree to the number of men proposed to be voted; but there were few instances in which a greater number was proposed. If the present question was agreed to, our naval force would consist of 60,000 men; and if it should hereafter appear that a larger number was necessary, there would be no difficulty in increasing it.

Mr. *Elliot* said, he was always willing to give every support in his power towards the defence of the country, whenever its necessities appeared to demand it; but he must complain of the sort of systematic darkness in which ministers wished to keep that House. In former times, the custom constantly prevailed, whenever such a vote was submitted, to afford the most satisfactory information as to the nature of the case; that they might judge whether it was such as required the vote proposed. Ever since the treaty of Amiens had been concluded, that House had not been put in possession of any information as to the exterior relations of the country. It was extremely improper to go on, session after session, without such information as we had formerly been accustomed to receive when votes of men and money were demanded. However, considering himself pledged only to a measure of precaution, he should give his vote for the motion.

Mr. *Canning* said:—Sir, I have no thoughts of pursuing the discussion of the constitutional doctrine, respecting information and confidence which has been carried to such a length between the hon. gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Fox) and my noble friend. I have sufficiently declared my opinion upon this subject, by the question which I took the liberty of putting to ministers on a former night, and to which I received an answer not very mildly worded, nor such, perhaps, as, under all circumstances, a minister was very well warranted in giving. No matter. That answer, such as it was, completely satisfied my purpose in asking the question. My purpose was, to ascertain, whether, in the event of the present armament not leading to war, any ground for it would be laid before parliament, any account of the reasons which had led to it, or of the purposes which it had answered. Nor was this an inquiry of idle curiosity. The answer to it was, in fact, to influence not indeed my vote, but the manner in which I should give it, the reasons and qualifications with which I should accompany it. If I had been told, that in case of either result, whether of war or of accommodation, ministers would at the proper time, lay before parliament, all the

Digitized by Google

information requisite for enabling them to form a judgment upon the propriety and policy of the present extraordinary preparation and alarm, I should have felt completely satisfied in concurring silently in the vote of this night, as well as that upon the address, knowing that the question of "whether rightly called for, or not, by the executive government," would come in a natural course to be matter of discussion. I would not in that case have encumbered my vote with any statement of my view of its extent or meaning. But ministers having called for a vote of this sort without any statement of the grounds of it, or the promise of any such statement except in one alternative,—that of war, I have an additional duty to perform; I must, from the best observation that I can make, form my own opinion of the necessity of the measure which is proposed, and of the results to which it ought to lead; and as ministers will not tell me the grounds on which they ask my vote, I feel it the more incumbent on me to make myself understood as to the grounds on which I give it to them.—The advantage of the course which ministers have preferred is not so obvious to my mind, as it seems to be to that of some other gentlemen. It secures unanimity to be sure; for that which pledges no man to any thing, may very naturally obtain a pretty general concurrence. But I doubt whether the same latitude of interpretation, which embraces all opinions in one vote, does not weaken in a proportionable degree its force as well as its precision. The hon. gentleman opposite to me, for instance, considers his vote of this night as pledging him absolutely to nothing — nothing but that 10,000 seamen shall be raised; but as to what is to follow the raising them; nay, if the mere fact of raising them, if this armament itself (no impossible supposition) should be the cause of hostile discussion with France, and ultimately of war, he does not consider himself as pledged in the smallest degree; he does not engage to countenance ministers in that discussion, or to support them in the prosecution of that war.—My noble friend has told us, and truly, that in all times the single fact of the fitting out of armaments in the ports of a neighbouring and rival power, would have been held to justify a similar armament here. Undoubtedly it would; undoubtedly too the fact of the armament abroad must be taken in this, as in former instances, on the king's word, on the faith of the message which ministers have advised his majesty to send down. But here the question with me is, not, would this be a sufficient reason? but, is this the reason? If the message had said no more; if my noble friend would tell us plainly (which, however, consistently with the message it is impossible for him to do), "this is all—the French are arming, therefore it behoves us to arm too," I should not have a moment's hesitation in voting any number of seamen that ministers might propose, or in concurring in any other vote for enabling them to meet, and defeat, the possible designs of the enemy.—I should give my vote without a word of explanation; and should perfectly understand the vote that I was giving.—But that this is not a true statement, that it is not the whole truth of the present case, is manifest, as well from the message itself, as from a comparison of the conduct of ministers on this occasion, with what it has been at former, not very distant periods, when armaments to a much greater extent were carrying on in the ports of France. I allude to the first expedition to the West Indies last year, between the signing of the preliminaries and the definitive treaty; —when so far from expressing any jealousy, so far from putting parliament and the country upon their guard, so far from sending down a message to call for increased preparation, and to excite the idea of an approaching renewal of the war ministers professed themselves perfectly at ease; and those persons in this House who ventured to intimate a suspicion, that such an armament, at so delicate a moment when the peace was yet raw and unsettled, might possibly be intended for other objects than those which were given out, such persons, I say, were vehemently reprehended and rebuked by ministers and their admirers in this House, as entertaining unwarrantable jealousies, as creating ill blood between new friends, as aspersing the character of the first consul of France and ascribing to him a disposition to falsehood and treachery which could not be imputed without the grossest injustice.—Now what is the state of the case? Those same ministers put into the mouth of the king a message complaining of armaments in France, in nearly the same terms as those which last year so much excited their indignation and reprehension; and insinuating that these armaments, though "avowedly" intended for colonial pur-

Digitized by Google

poses (meaning, I suppose, for the purpose of taking possession of their own colonies, for otherwise the information, however authentic, would not be very comfortable, nor the "avowal" on the part of the enemy a very modest one,) are in fact destined against the shores of this empire. I cannot, therefore, be satisfied with the general argument, that, in all cases, preparation against preparation, outfit against outfit, armament against armament, has been the uniform policy of this country, and a sufficient foundation for the proceedings of parliament. It has not been so in the instance of the present ministers; and the contrast between their former and present conduct, between what they did and said on the expedition to Saint Domingo, and what they are saying and doing now, between their rebukes at that time of those who presumed to doubt the good faith of Buonaparté, and their plain declaration, in the royal message, of their own heavy suspicions of him at the present moment, is a sufficient proof that some great and ominous change has taken place in the relation between this country and France, and that when ministers call upon me for my vote for 10,000 additional seamen, or whatever other sort or description of force they may please to call for, I am not to conceive myself to be voting that force on the old constitutional ground of necessary precaution only; but that there are in truth other objects in contemplation, that there are in truth nearer and more precise questions at issue.—The message itself states plainly the existence of these other objects: and at length, in his second speech this night, my noble friend has admitted that the "important discussions still pending between this country and France" have their share in originating the proposition for an increased military force, and are in fact in the contemplation of the vote for which we are now called upon. This, Sir, is the very admission which I wanted, but which it was so difficult to obtain. What! says my noble friend, if the mere circumstance of an armament in a neighbouring country would justify the government in requiring an augmentation of force, does not the additional circumstance of important discussions being actually pending between that country and this, give additional weight to the requisition? Undoubtedly, Sir, most undoubtedly. But does it not also entitle the House of Commons to more precise information? I do not mean at the instant—that is matter of discretion—but to a promise at least of information hereafter; when the discussions shall have been terminated, and when the objects of them can therefore be disclosed without danger. Do not let me be mistaken, as if I were pressing for full information now, beforehand, as if I desired to be let into the secret of negotiations at this moment carrying on, and the success of which may possibly depend upon their being managed with prudence and secrecy? No such thing. All that common place is thrown away in answer to my proposition; which is this only, that some time or other, at a proper season, and when the disclosure can be made without hazarding any interest, the House of Commons will have a right to expect that the use which has been made of their grants, the purpose to which they have been applied, and the effect with which they have been employed, should be fairly stated to them. That is the only rational confidence in which they can vote. With that confidence they may reasonably vote even in the dark; trusting that their darkness is not to continue for ever.—Here then, Sir, in the union of these two grounds stated in the king's message, in the statement that armaments are going on in the ports of the enemy, and that there are at this moment important discussions pending between us and France, do I find the justification of this night's vote; and upon these grounds, taken together, do I cheerfully concur in it.—I vote for 10,000 seamen, or any other number that ministers please to ask, not only to enable government to be prepared against any sudden invasion, or any hostile aggression which may be committed by the armaments in France and Holland in any part of the world, against the rights and interests of this country; but further to enable them to bring at length to a point all the discussions which are at this moment pending between them and the first consul of France. I inquire not, I have no wish to know, on what subjects those discussions turn. It is notorious enough that there are but too many possible grounds for them; that some of the articles of the treaty of Amiens are yet unexecuted, some of them perhaps unexecutable; and that there have been on the part of France acts of insult, violence, and outrage, innumerable, unexampled, intolerable, for which ministers are per-

Digitized by Google

fectly justified in demanding reparation and atonement. I ask not for any information at this moment. I express only my confident hope that ministers have asked for this armament, and that they will employ it effectually, to bring to a final settlement all these vexatious and perplexing differences which have already, God knows, been suffered to subsist too long; that they are determined to be trifled with, mocked, and wronged no longer; that they think the country has already suffered enough by delay and irritation; that they will not lay by the means of exertion which they have now acquired, nor let them languish in their hands, until they shall have converted the present ambiguous and feverish repose, which is at once the disgrace and danger of the country, into solid and real peace. This I expect of them. I trust that they, in common with the public, are weary and ashamed of the state in which we have been kept; a state anomalous and undefinable; a state, for which the annals of history afford no precedent, and the vocabulary of politics furnishes no name; a state, not of profound peace, as it was most whimsically and unaccountably described by a right. hon. gentleman below me (the chancellor of the exchequer) a few nights ago! but a state neither of peace nor of war; neither of secure rest, nor of honourable or hopeful exertions; peace, if peace it must be called, without tranquillity, without economy, without safety; and subject to all the anxieties, more than all the dangers, and no small part of the expenses of war, without the chance of its advantages, without the consolation of its glories, and without that prospect which war, vigorously conducted, always affords, of leading to a termination in secure, settled, and permanent peace.—This state, I say, I hope ministers are determined by every exertion to change into a definite and durable state of things; by war, if war for that purpose shall be unavoidable; but by firmness, by spirit, by a resolution to be trampled upon no longer, I believe it may be effected; and I believe, if these means had been sooner resorted to, the effect might have been produced long ago. In this confidence, and in the confidence that, when they surrender up an account of the trust which we are now committing to them, they will show us what they have done with it, and satisfy us that they have employed it to the best advantage, I heartily concur in the present vote; but I warn them, that if they should relax their efforts before they have accomplished all that is required of them, if they should come down to parliament with a history that the armament in the hostile ports had, after all, sailed to its avowed destination, and that therefore there is an end of jealousy and preparation on our part; if they shall attempt to put this fraud and trick upon the country; if they shall no otherwise atone and account for the shock to public confidence and public quiet, which their late message has produced,—unnecessarily: if no other result than that which I am here cautioning them against should be apparent; if, in a word, instead of a complete, honourable, and durable settlement and consolidation of the peace, they shall do no more than restore the country, after this shock, to the same feverish, unwholesome repose from which they roused it; to that slumber which is disturbed by constant alarms, and perpetually recurring horrors and dangers, by which the country is not refreshed and recruited, but exhausted, harassed, and agitated, even more than by war in its worst form; if this should be the end of all our preparations, the produce and reward of all our confidence, I shall then accuse ministers of having disappointed the vote of this night, and abused the trust reposed in them, of having deceived parliament, and betrayed and undone the nation. This, Sir, is the meaning of my vote. And with this explanation I heartily concur in the proposition upon your table.—One word only upon a subject which has been introduced into the debate of this night, the persons and characters of those who fill responsible situations in his majesty's service, and their capacity to conduct the affairs of the country in a crisis of such difficulty and danger. Sir, at a moment like the present, I, for one, cannot pause to inquire who are the ministers of the crown. The crown calls upon us for instant help to avert instant danger. This is not a time to consider into what hands the management of what we grant is to be committed. We have no leisure to choose. Awful indeed is the responsibility of those who advise the call that is thus made upon us; and the time of this account must come. But for the present let us give without hesitation all that can be required by the executive government, be it in whose hands it may; trusting that the means which are thus

Digitized by Google

cheerfully furnished to them will be employed in a manner suitable to the importance of the interests at stake, and such as shall deserve the unqualified support which is afforded by parliament, and the zealous and enthusiastic unanimity which pervades all ranks of the people.

Sir *W. Pulteney* observed, that the people might be reluctant to enter into a war, of which they could not perceive the precise object. But if once they were shown and enabled to see that a war was unavoidable, they would cordially determine upon a vigorous prosecution of it. Now was the time to show all Europe that this country was prepared for any alternative. He hoped, indeed, it was so prepared as to be enabled to meet any hostile attempt. That the country was not able to enter into such a contest, he could not agree. It was as able as ever; and since, to every considerate observer, it must appear that a struggle must come between England and France, it was better it should come now than hereafter.

The resolution was agreed to *nem. con.*

Debate in the Commons on the King's Message respecting the Situation of the Prince of Wales.] Feb. 28. The Chancellor of the Exchequer having moved, that the House should resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, on the King's Message respecting the Prince of Wales,

Colonel *Stanley* asked, whether it was intended to raise money for the purpose of relieving the embarrassments of the prince; or whether this measure was not a compromise for certain claims of money, which had not been appropriated to his use? If it was a compromise on account of claims on the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall he must say that the House could not know whether he had any legal claim or not, as lawyers were very much divided in opinion upon that subject. In any other light, his duty to his constituents, would not allow him to lay any additional burdens upon them on this account.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* denied, that the present motion was founded at all upon a compromise of claims; neither was it for the purpose of paying the prince's debts, as they had been already provided for by a former arrangement; it was merely with the view of re-establishing his Royal Highness in that splendor which belonged to his rank in the state.

The House having resolved itself into a committee,

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, he rose to submit a proposition, which he flattered himself would meet with the general acquiescence of the committee; for it was impossible for him to entertain a doubt that every member felt that he had a constitutional share of interest in the splendor and dignity of the heir apparent. He was perfectly convinced, that those who proposed the measure in 1795, and those who supported it, felt it a painful but indispensable part of their duty to adopt the measure, which was afterwards agreed to, and made a legislative provision. It would be recollected, that in April 1795, a message came from his majesty recommending an extension of the establishment of the prince of Wales; expressing a regret that the income of his Royal Highness had not been adequate to the support of his station; and stating distinctly, that his majesty had no idea of proposing to parliament to make a provision for the discharge of the debts of his Royal Highness, otherwise than by appropriating a part of his income for that purpose. Upon this message the House had acted; the measure was proposed by his right hon. friend the late minister, who brought forward the proposition, founded on a just comparison of the means to support the establishment of the prince of Wales, with the amount of his incumbrances; and a comparison was also made between the state and condition of things in the year 1795, and those of former periods. His right hon. friend had stated, that in 1742, a provision was made by parliament to the then prince of Wales, of 100,000*l.* per annum, exclusive of the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall; and all that his right hon. friend asked of the committee at that time was, to consider the change which had taken place in the value of money from the year 1742 to the year 1795, and desiring them also to consider the necessary increase of the establishment of the prince of Wales in consequence of such changes. There had been also an increase of 25,000*l.* per annum granted on that establishment, an addition which very few persons thought exorbitant, and to which, therefore, little objection was made. His right hon. friend then argued, that the income of his Royal Highness, in 1795, would not, in reality, become greater by what he proposed, than that which had been enjoyed by his royal

Digitized by Google

grand-father. In 1745, a motion was made, that 60,000*l.* should be received by his then royal highness, which was adopted by a large majority of that House. Thus, his right hon. friend had argued in support of his then proposition, which was adopted by the House. Then there came another part of his majesty's message under the consideration of the committee, and on which there was more difference of opinion than on the former. Some thought that no discharge of the debts of the prince of Wales should be considered in that House; that no arrangements should be made, and that the charge of it should be borne by the public. Others concurred in thinking, that provision should be made for the liquidation of the debts of his Royal Highness, but that the burthen should not be borne by the public, but should come out of the income of his Royal Highness himself. It was, however, the opinion of his right hon. friend, who wished to combine the true interests of his Royal Highness with a just regard to the interest of his creditors, that provision should be made for the payment of their claims, by the appropriation of 60,000*l.* per annum, of the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall, and that means must be found for the liquidation of the debts of his Royal Highness. The distinct proposition was assented to; and this was the general wish of the House, namely, that some measure should take place for liquidating the debts of his Royal Highness; the means to accomplish which end produced a variety of conflicting opinions; but the House was relieved from further difficulties by a gracious communication from his Royal Highness himself. [Here the chancellor of the exchequer read the message of his Royal Highness to the House, which was brought down by Mr. Anstruther]. This gracious message was received with respect and gratitude: and the House proceeded to instruct its committee as to the mode in which the bill should be brought in; in which provision was made for the management of his Royal Highness's household—what was to be allotted for that purpose, and what part of the income of his Royal Highness should be appropriated to the liquidation of his debts. It was the opinion of the House at that time, that they would better discharge their duty to his Royal Highness and to their constituents, by adopting a measure which applied part of the income of his Royal Highness for the satisfaction of his creditors; but the primary object of the measure which was then adopted was, to liquidate the debts, under which parliament gave to his Royal Highness an admonition; for, applying so large a proportion of his income to the payment of his debts, was an admonition. But if any persons were now present who concurred in that measure, he would ask them, if they had made up their minds to this, that such measure being to be continued for twelve years, and his Royal Highness having sustained it for eight years, they did not think that he had already continued a sufficient time in that situation? By the bill to which he had alluded, it was provided, that the debts of the prince should be investigated, and an appropriation was made out of the revenues of his Royal Highness, which appropriation was 13,000*l.* per annum, the revenue of the duchy of Cornwall, and 60,000*l.* per annum out of his income to discharge debts which were estimated at 650,000*l.* so that 13,000*l.* and 60,000*l.* per annum, together, were employed in discharging a capital debt of 650,000*l.* and debentures were issued for that purpose. Here he entered into the detail of the application of those funds for the liquidation of his Royal Highness's debts. The result of which was, that on the 5th of January last, there had been paid off 568,395*l.* and the whole would be discharged in July 1806. He desired it to be recollected, that his Royal Highness had passed eight years of his life in a state of comparative obscurity. Was the committee prepared to say, that his Royal Highness should remain in this situation of comparative obscurity four years longer? It should be recollected, that the House had not paid one shilling towards the discharge of the debts of his Royal Highness for the last eight years. He wished it to be remembered also, that parliament had no embarrassment whatever in this case; for, at the time of the last arrangement, no pledge whatever was entered into of not considering the subject again: every member was therefore at liberty to act as a due sense of duty should dictate. He did not wish to interrupt the plan adopted to prevent the accumulation of any future debts. What he wished to do was, to enable his majesty to grant to the prince the same income as he had previous to the arrangement of his affairs, namely, 60,000*l.* per annum. This, he was persuaded, would not appear ex-

Digitized by Google

cessive, when it was considered, that 90 years ago, a prince of Wales had 90,000*l.* per annum, and that his Royal Highness, in 1795, had only 138,000*l.* and which was not then supposed to be more than sufficient to support his state and dignity; and that which was in 1795 deemed no more than sufficient, must be admitted to be moderate indeed at the present moment, considering the great change which had taken place in the value of money during the last eight years. He was as much attached to economy, as any one; but he would ask with confidence, was the state of this country such as to make us doubt its sufficiency to provide for his Royal Highness the additional sum of 60,000*l.* thereby placing him only in the situation he was in at a period of war, and now we were in a period of peace? An hon. gentleman was desirous of knowing, whether any compromise had taken place on the occasion. He wished to be distinctly understood on this subject. He could say with perfect satisfaction, that if he had never heard one word of the petition of right, the proposition he was about to submit he should have voted for, let it come from whatever quarter it might in that House. He thought it essentially necessary to the splendor of the prince of Wales. And when he said splendor, he did not mean that vain ostentation which thoughtless persons mistook for splendor. He spoke not merely of equipage and external appearance, though these were not to be totally disregarded in such an elevated station, but he meant something of much greater value, that of enabling his Royal Highness to be munificent to merit, to promote, by his countenance, great and liberal undertakings. He wished to see the prince of Wales placed in a situation to receive the due attentions of the nobility and gentry, to be able to return them the comforts of hospitality, and to receive them in a manner suitable to his own rank and their wishes; for on this much depended of that intercourse between a prince and the higher classes of the subjects of this realm, which contributed so much to the harmony of the state, and which was therefore much to be cherished. He should now move, "That his majesty be enabled to grant a yearly sum, or sums of money, out of the consolidated fund of Great Britain, not exceeding, in the whole, the sum of sixty thousand pounds; to take place, and be computed from the 5th day of January 1803, and to continue until the 5th day of July 1806, towards providing for the better support of the station and dignity of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales."

The *Solicitor-General* (Mr. Manners Sutton) said:—Sir, in offering my sentiments to the committee I feel, in common with them, the great importance of the subject, as well as the dignity of the illustrious personage to whom it relates. But although I cease to have the honour of being in the service of his Royal Highness, yet I have the satisfaction of retaining, what to my mind is much more valuable, the confidence of his Royal Highness. In stating to the House the sentiments of the prince of Wales, I am desired to express, in the strongest terms, his unfeigned gratitude to his majesty for the interest that he has been pleased to take in what regards the dignity and comforts of his Royal Highness's situation, evinced as it has been in the gracious message which has been sent to this House I am also desired to state, in terms no less strong, that his Royal Highness submits with the utmost chearfulness to the wisdom and justice of the House, in whatever resolution they may adopt with respect to the present subject. I am convinced, that it has ever been the first object of the prince to show his sincere respect and duty for his country. Of his ardent desire to preserve, without the possibility of diminution, the harmony which should exist between him and his royal father, every one is deeply convinced; and he would forego every claim of right, rather than enter into a contest, the event of which, however successful, must be to his Royal Highness the subject of serious regret. The House will, I am sure, readily admit, from the statements which I have made, the propriety of the prince's sentiments; and they will be able to appreciate how very just and dignified his ideas are on the present occasion, since no doubt can be entertained of the legality of his right. For, notwithstanding what has been thrown out by an hon. gentleman on the diversity of legal opinions, I feel no hesitation in maintaining, that the claims of his Royal Highness are too firmly established to be shaken by any opinion which may be brought forward to invalidate them. I assure the committee that I feared no results from the prosecution of the right, but those which might unfortunately lead to a difference between his

Digitized by Google

majesty and his eldest son; and it was by that consideration that his Royal Highness was solely influenced. In adverting to the grounds for his majesty's gracious message, I can discover none but those public grounds which have been so ably stated by my right hon. friend. It must be obvious from their nature, and the candour with which they have been brought forward, that there are no other. There certainly has been no compromise, nor has any circumstance occurred which can warrant such a supposition. I assure the committee, that the intimation of the present measure, when communicated to his Royal Highness, came altogether unexpected; that no terms were attempted to be imposed upon him; and that he was left at full liberty to prosecute the justice of his claim. When this subject was submitted last session to the consideration of the House, I stated, that, however great the expenses incurred by the heir apparent had been, they had not fallen upon the public. I now repeat that statement. Let those who are inclined to doubt it, consider the material difference which exist between the present and former times, between the situation of his Royal Highness and that of his illustrious predecessors.

Sir *Ralph Milbank* said, that it was notorious, that the prince had lived in a state of comparative obscurity, for the last eight years, and that it was time to restore him to that state and splendor, which became his exalted rank.

Mr. *Harrison* objected to the manner of granting this annuity, as a boon to his Royal Highness, when it was clear, that he was a creditor to the public, for more than the amount of his outstanding debts. The solicitor general had informed them, that legal opinions were agreed upon that subject. Although for his part, he did not think the dignity of monarchy depended upon its trappings, yet when he saw splendor in every corner of the court, and in all its appendages, he saw no reason why the prince of Wales should be the only person from whom it was withheld.

Lord *Castlereagh* was of opinion last year, when this matter was first suggested, that the time was come for restoring the prince to the full dignity and comforts, which became his rank; but as the claims of the prince then came forward in a more legal shape, it was necessary to await a legal decision. He perfectly approved however of the feeling which dictated that course, namely, that the prince wished rather that his debts should be paid out of his own means, than that he should appear burthensome to the public.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he preferred so much the character of his Royal Highness to his comforts, that if this was to be represented to the public as a boon to the prince (who had come down to parliament a third time for payment of his debts), he was not prepared to say that he should support it. The fact was this, the prince had in the course of the last session, applied for the restoration of his right, not on his own account, but for the sake of his creditors: there was a long discussion both historical and political, on his claims, but the house resolved that they could do nothing in it. A petition of right was then proceeded upon, but suddenly the proceedings were stopped, and this message came down to the House. The right hon. gentleman objected to the word compromise, but it was because he considered it a fair and honourable compromise, that he supported it. As to the petition of right, it would have been very doubtful when it could have been decided. The glorious uncertainty of the law, was a thing well known and complained of, by all ignorant people, but all learned gentlemen considered it as its greatest excellency. He therefore thought this was a fair and honourable compromise, but he wished the House to bear in their minds, that his Royal Highness considered himself in honour and in justice bound to pay his creditors the 10*l.* per cent which the commissioners had reduced of their demands; and until that was done, his Royal Highness could not resume conscientiously, nor in honour, his state and dignity.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* explained this circumstance in the following manner: for all the debts which were fairly and justly due, there were given to the creditors, who were at liberty to accept them at their option, debentures of 100*l.* bearing 3 per cent interest, or 90*l.* bearing 5 per cent: those who preferred the 90*l.* could not be said to have their debt reduced, as by law, no interest at all was due on debts, which were merely book debts. He was glad that this measure would silence for ever the petition of right. Although legal opinions had said, that the prince was entitled to an account of the revenues of Cornwall,

Digitized by Google

no one had said, that in that account, no allowances were to be made for money expended for his use; but at all events, if there were a legal judgment, the fund was gone on which it was to be a lien; and if the prince should be obliged at length to come to parliament for its equitable interpretation of the judgment, it would let in an account between the public and the prince, which it was much better not to go into. He concluded by maintaining, that there had been no deduction made from the debts of the creditors.

Mr. *Fox* said:—Sir; I feel myself called upon to rise in consequence of the allusion made to the transactions of 1795, in which I took so considerable a part. In that year I considered the business was closed, and therefore I conceive any allusion to the business of 1787 extremely improper. The only question is, whether, after eight years of privation, the prince shall be restored to the possession of his full income, and be enabled to resume that state which it is consistent with the dignity of the nation that he should maintain. If we were arguing this proposition simply, and without reference to any thing that may add strength to the claim, I should say, we should be guilty of the greatest severity, if we did not agree in the propriety of such a measure. But if for eight years his Royal Highness has submitted to a system of restraint and privation, if there are, besides, other reasons which enforce his Royal Highness's title, are not these grounds why an addition should now be made to his income?—Is there any one member who did not believe at the time the system so long pursued was established, that before eight years should have elapsed his Royal Highness's income would have received an addition? The claim of his Royal Highness for the arrears of the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall should enter seriously into the consideration of the House. I am ready to believe the right hon. gentleman, when he declares, that if that claim had never been agitated, he should have conceived it his duty to support the grant which he now proposes; but, is that a reason why parliament should not take the claim into account, when a grant is to be made to his Royal Highness? It is true, the precise amount of the claim is not made out; but at least it is universally acknowledged, that he has a right to an account, and to whatever balance may appear on that account to be owing to him. The right hon. gentleman says also, that if his Royal Highness's claim was made out, and established in law, he would yet have no remedy, because the law allows no lien on the property of the king. But surely we are not to be seriously told, that his Royal Highness would in such case, be left entirely without redress? For who is there that would suffer it to be said, "It is true the prince of Wales has the right; he has established the justice and legality of his demand; but the law affords no remedy against the king, and therefore his Royal Highness is in just the same situation that he was." Who is there that would, for an instant, suffer the prerogative of the crown to remain burthened with so odious an imputation? His Royal Highness was prosecuting his just claim in the modes most respectful to his majesty and to parliament. On being informed that the measure proposed this night was in agitation, he compromised those claims. I do not mean a compromise in the strict sense of the word; but I think it very material to be known, that in consequence of the grant to be made this night, his Royal Highness abandons claims of such magnitude, and so well-founded. But when gentlemen talk of this as a third application to parliament for the liquidation of debts, I think it material to state, that this claim, or rather this right, exists on the part of his Royal Highness; and that this is no application on his part. His Royal Highness is not in the situation of an applicant to the bounty of parliament. Surely, it is not extraordinary that, after a lapse of eight years, accompanied with circumstances which have materially affected the income of every man, his majesty should send down a message, recommending to his parliament to make some addition to the income of the prince of Wales. In 1795, there were some persons who thought that, burthened as this country then was, 125,000*l.* was too great an income. I did not; but I wished to abide by it, because I thought it right that a fixed system should be established with respect to every branch of the royal family, and even with respect to his majesty himself, rather than that a practice should become prevalent of making applications to parliament every five or ten years for increased provisions on the ground of variations in the value of money. But certainly, while the practice continues, the prince is among

Digitized by Google

the first to whom parliament would be ready to allow the benefit of it. We were given to understand by the right hon. gentleman in the first instance, that the prince was immediately to resume his state: then the right hon. gentleman, on better information, said, that his Royal Highness would for sometime be prevented from resuming it by motives highly honourable to himself. The right hon. gentleman comes next with a still further explanation; and says, that he meant, in speaking of the motives by which his Royal Highness was actuated in determining on this further privation, merely to do justice to his Royal Highness's honourable feelings, without giving any opinion as to the justice of the further claims by which his Royal Highness still held himself bound. We are told that the whole of the British debt has been included under the arrangement for the liquidation; but that the foreign debt has not been included under it, because it could not be examined by the commissioners. But will the right hon. gentleman say, that because it could not be so examined, it is not justly and honourably due. He says, that no allowance should be made for the reduction of 10 per cent because he had proposed an alternative. But that alternative was such that it must even be preferred to submit to a deduction of 10 per cent than to make the other choice. The right hon. gentleman says, that there was still an advantage, because book debts bear no interest. It is true, they do not while they continue in that shape; but when they are converted, by settlement, into regular securities, these securities are, in every case, liable to interest. The right hon. gentleman says, that the loss by discount is matter of no consideration, because it would not have been incurred if the debentures had been kept up. It is true; but I should be glad to know what use the debentures are of, if one cannot buy and sell them? We are told, that if the money had been vested in the consols, it would have been subject to the same depreciation. That may be, but then an allowance would have been made in the investment. It has been said, that subsequent to the arrangement of 1795, no legal debts affect his Royal Highness. That is certainly true, because it is specified that no debt can be legal after that arrangement. All since that time must be debts of honour, of which it must be for his Royal Highness to judge how far they are binding. And I think that when 10 per cent is generally struck off, when his Royal Highness is prevented from incurring legal debts, he must have such debts as he will feel himself bound in honour to discharge. The House may say, "We give you a great income, and leave you to determine the use you shall make of it; what claims you shall think legal, and what binding in honour." I certainly think, that if 79,000*l.* a year were given, and his Royal Highness were desired to have lords of the bed-chamber, and every thing else of that kind, the consequence would be, that, by creating a great establishment before the proper time, new incumbrances would accumulate, and a necessity would arise for coming again to parliament. I think the best advice we can give is, to say to his Royal Highness, "Consider your income, and determine what degree of state you will assume, and when you will assume it." But if it is determined that he shall assume this state immediately, let an application be made to parliament for further aid. To this last proceeding I could have no objection, particularly when his Royal Highness abandons the claims arising out of the duchy of Cornwall. But I deprecate all idea of an application, as in 1787. If it is determined that his Royal Highness shall resume his state immediately, I would say to parliament, "Extinguish not only the debts, but the embarrassments, and place his Royal Highness at once in that state in which he has never been, I had almost said, since his birth, but certainly never since his coming to man's estate; in which he may say, here is an income on which I may live in a manner becoming my rank and dignity.

Mr. *Bankes* strongly objected to the resolution, because it went to debar the prince from pursuing his claim on the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall. It was not fair to make such a compromise with his Royal Highness; nor was the House dealing fairly with itself. Was it not fit that the situation of princes of Wales hereafter should be known and ascertained? What was in future to become of the money during the minority of a prince? Was he to understand that it was not to be applicable to his use? He saw no inconvenience that could arise from a petition of right.

The resolution was then agreed to.

Feb. 25. His Majesty's Message on

Digitized by Google

the subject was taken into consideration in the House of Lords. Lord Pelham, after a few preliminary observations, moved an address to his majesty. Lord Carlisle seconded the motion, but wished the question had been decided on the petition of right. After a few words from lord Moira, in praise of the conduct of his Royal Highness upon this occasion, the address was agreed to *nem. diss.*

Communication from the Prince of Wales to the Commons.] Feb. 28. Mr. Tyrwhitt, keeper of the privy seal, and private secretary to the Prince of Wales, acquainted the House,

"That the Prince has felt with the most sincere and affectionate gratitude, the gracious purpose of his majesty in recommending his present situation to the consideration of parliament:—That, having seen, by the votes of the House of Commons, the manner in which they have received his majesty's recommendation, the Prince deems it incumbent on him to express his warmest acknowledgment of their liberality. At the same time, the Prince, though fully convinced of the propriety of resuming his state, and greatly regretting any circumstance which tends to disappoint the wishes of his majesty, or of the House, upon that subject, yet feels himself bound explicitly to declare, that there are still claims remaining upon his honour and his justice, for the discharge of which he must continue to set apart, in trust, a large sinking fund, and consequently postpone, until the period of their liquidation, the resumption of that state and dignity, which, however essential to his rank and station, he knows, from dear bought experience, could not, under his present circumstances, be resumed, without the risk of incurring new difficulties. The Prince thinks that he owes it to himself and to parliament, to make this declaration to them with the same distinctness as he stated it to his majesty's government upon the first communication made to him of his majesty's benign intentions. With respect to the Prince's claim to an account of the revenues which accrued from the duchy of Cornwall, from the year 1762 to 1783, however strong his confidence in the validity of his claim, a confidence fortified by the greatest legal authorities, yet, as he trusts that, through the gracious interposition of his majesty, and the liberality of parliament, he shall be enabled otherwise to provide for those demands on his justice which alone induced him to assert his right, he now cheerfully relinquishes his suit, and has directed his law officers to forego all further proceedings."

Debate on Mr. Calcraft's Motion respecting certain Claims on the Prince of Wales.] March 4. Mr. *Calcraft*, before he entered upon the main subject of his motion, wished to renew a declaration which he made on a former evening, in consequence of a suggestion from a learned gentleman (Mr. Erskine). He was desirous that the House should be fully apprised, that the present proceeding originated entirely from himself. The subject was evidently of a delicate nature; but he trusted that the manner he meant to adopt would be such as could not prove offensive to any party. In the bill still before them, the House had gone the full length of what ministers proposed; but it was not so certain that their late grant went to the extent of his majesty's message; and, in his mind, something remained still to be accomplished. He meant to submit to them a motion for a committee to inquire into the extent of the claims on the honour and justice of the Prince of Wales, which must still, notwithstanding the liberality of parliament, retard the resumption of that state and dignity befitting the heir apparent of these realms. To any inquiries made by a committee in parliament, those objections could not apply, which might be urged against any other mode of investigation. On referring to the message, gentlemen would see that it expressed his majesty's reliance on their zeal and attachment, for what may be necessary for the purpose of restoring the state and dignity of the Prince of Wales. From the general terms, it appeared to him, that more was included than had yet been done. The House had made a very considerable grant; but the public did not find themselves one jot nearer the accomplishment of their expectations. The chancellor of the exchequer had, on a former day, declared, that were the motives of his Royal Highness's forbearance in this respect made public, they would be such as to reflect the highest honour on him. But he, as a member of parliament, anxious to maintain the dignity of the nation, was bound to institute an inquiry, and not accept the declaration of the minister, nor even that of the royal personage himself. It was impossible for

Digitized by Google

the Prince to be restored to the state suited to him, and at the same time make an appropriation for the discharge of his existing debts; and therefore it was advisable to remove, at once, every load and clog. If there was any obstacle to be found in the financial state of the country, that would be a fit subject for the consideration of the committee. If the country was in other respects able to support the national splendor and dignity, he could not account for parsimony being confined solely to the circumstances of the heir apparent; nor why he should be compelled to reside in a corner of his palace, surrounded by difficulties and embarrassments. He had now discharged his duty, and should conclude by moving, "That this House, anxiously desirous to give full effect to the important objects recommended to their consideration in his majesty's most gracious message of the 16th of February, do appoint a select committee to request and receive information respecting the extent of those claims upon the justice and honour of the Prince of Wales, which, according to the official communications made to this House, impede his Royal Highness's anxious desire to fulfil his Majesty's benign intention, and accord to the wishes of this House, by resuming that state and dignity which belong to the heir apparent of the British Empire."

Mr. *Erskine* said, that the hon. gentleman having adverted to what had been said by him on a former night, he thought it right to trouble them with a very few words. When he came that night into the House without any knowledge of the business it was engaged in, an hon. gentleman, who held an official situation, was reading in his place a communication from his Royal Highness, and he (Mr. E.) then assured the House, that the prince had repeatedly expressed to him his perfect contentment with the gracious intention of the king, and the liberal grant of parliament, though he thought it a duty incumbent upon him, at the same time, to declare, that he could not for the present resume his state and dignity which the House seemed desirous should be re-established. He thought it now therefore necessary to add, that the motion before them of which the hon. gentleman at the same moment had given notice, was wholly unknown to the illustrious person to whom it related, as it might otherwise be conceived that it had been made with the Prince's privity, which would be at variance with the satisfaction he had expressed. Mr. E. said, that proud as he was of possessing the confidence of acting as the servant of the Prince, he had a still higher character to maintain as an independent member of parliament.—The present motion was no censure upon the proper reserve of his majesty's ministers in avoiding every unnecessary pressure upon the people, and if it were, he would certainly vote against it. The king had only asked the House to enable him to restore the state and dignity of the Prince of Wales, which we had assured his majesty of our readiness to do.—The sum voted however having turned out to be insufficient for that desirable object, the hon. gentleman seeks only by his motion to remedy that defect.—It was not therefore a renewed proposition on the part of the crown, but an original one by an independent member of parliament, for the necessary support of the state and dignity of our monarchical government.—He had risen thus early to make it clear that the present motion was not in opposition to the message nor to the address of the House in answer to it.—He was, sure on the contrary that the right hon. gentleman's disposition towards the Prince was not limited to the specific sum which had been granted, and that he would willingly accede to any addition which circumstances then unknown might render necessary.—At all events, he anxiously hoped that the business would be settled without any reference to the legal claim of the Prince.—He (Mr. E.) had never stated that claim to amount to any specific sum, but only that the Prince was entitled to the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall from his birth,—a doctrine which received the tacit assent of lord Ellenborough when attorney-general, and which had never been controverted by any lawyer in the House, the reason of the grant being for the sustentation of the Prince independent of the king, yet the whole of those revenues had nevertheless been received by the crown. It was not the matter in question what they amounted to, so as it was clear that the crown, or, in other words, the public, was debtor; that we had now a Prince of Wales of the age of forty who had been no burthen to the country whatever. The sum granted in consequence of the message was such as the House would have voted to *any Prince* of Wales though not so circumstanced,

Digitized by Google

since the chancellor of the exchequer had formerly expressly stated that it had no connexion with the claim in question. This, however, he wished to put altogether aside, his only object in troubling the House being to remove all idea that the Prince had any concern in the motion however fit to be made.—He was anxious alone that the public should not suppose that the Prince had received our bounty, but had not acted up to the motive and intention of the House, which no difficulties could have compelled him to do.

Mr. *Fuller* said, he had no doubt but that our ancestors meant to make the Prince of Wales independent of his father. What did the motion ask? Only that the embarrassments of the Prince should be inquired into by a committee of the House. The deductions made by the commissioners had tended to accumulate the debts, which the Prince thought himself bound in honour to pay.

Mr. *Cartwright* did not think the House could consistently go farther than it had done. With respect to his Royal Highness, he could not believe that the public reverence towards him would be in the least diminished by his remaining some time longer, if necessary, in his present situation.

Sir *R. Buxton* said, that he should be extremely happy to see the Prince resume the splendor and dignity to which his rank in the state so fully entitled him; but he then spoke as a representative of the people, and it behoved him as such to be very cautious how he imposed any additional burthens on them. He desired the House to look at France, and the gigantic exertions she was making to render herself the arbitress of Europe. He thought the Prince would do himself more honour by giving up the trappings of royalty at this moment, than by resuming them. For these reasons, he would move the previous question.

Mr. *Curwen* said, if there were debts due from the Prince, which would prevent him from immediately resuming the splendor attached to his exalted station, let the amount be stated to the House, and then they would be able to judge whether they would discharge them or not. If they agreed to a committee, and that committee, on investigation, found, that the amount was too great to be discharged, it would be holding out hopes to the illustrious personage alluded to, which might be disappointed. For these reasons he should vote for the previous question.

Mr. *Hylliard* thought the splendor and dignity of the heir apparent essential to the support of our excellent constitution. The House had determined to comply with his majesty's wishes, and that could not be done but by agreeing to the present motion; for the Prince had candidly shown the House, that the sum granted, though entirely satisfactory to him, would not enable him to resume immediately that state of splendor and dignity which was the object of it.

Mr. *Johnstone* felt himself bound to object to the motion. Though he felt that, to maintain in due splendor all the branches of the royal family was essential to the true interests of the country, he must contend that no arguments were stated to prove the necessity of revoking those arrangements which parliament had adopted in 1795. But gentlemen talked of the rights of the Prince, resulting from the duchy of Cornwall. This question was discussed in 1795, and it then was the duty of the Prince to urge his right, or rely on the generosity of the public. He had chosen the latter; and it was not fair, after experiencing the liberality of the country, to renew the claim of right. Why was not that discussion brought to an issue? No difference could arise between the King and the Prince, as was stated; for the revenues having been applied to the public service, the public was answerable. But there existed another good reason why the suit should not be prosecuted: that it could produce nothing; for, admitting the Prince entitled to the revenues of the duchy from the hour of his birth, the amount was 234,000*l.* Now during the last twelve years of his minority, the whole expenditure was 239,000*l.* to be set against a receipt of 234,000*l.* during the Prince's minority. But was this all? There had been paid 60,000*l.* on his coming of age, 219,000*l.* in 1787, and 52,000*l.* in 1795, beyond the fixed and regular allowances. So that on the whole there were payments to the amount of 570,000*l.* to be opposed to a claim of 234,000*l.* He stated these facts because he considered the people of England insulted when they were told that his Highness had made a sacrifice by condescending to accept between 2 and 300,000*l.*

Mr. *H. Lascelles* said, he could not approve the mode of investigating the subject by appointing a committee. If the

Digitized by Google

Prince had openly stated the full amount of his debts, the House would then have been able to form an exact judgment on the case, and might have come to an immediate decision on it. The claims of the duchy of Cornwall seemed to be held over the House *in terrorem*. It had been held out that the public was favoured by those claims being dropped. He was of a contrary opinion.

Sir *W. Geary* should give every support in his power to the immediate resumption of that state of splendor and dignity which should belong to the heir apparent to the crown. He had been told that the Prince could not immediately resume his becoming splendor; but in his opinion, the House should enable him immediately to do so, whatever it might cost.

Mr. *Burdon* thought, that to inquire any further into the circumstances of the case than his Royal Highness had thought proper to make known, would be extremely indelicate. That his Royal Highness should remain longer in a state of obscurity, was a subject of regret; but such a state of obscurity would not reflect the least dishonour on his Royal Highness; particularly when the motives for it were considered. We were told that debts of honour, &c. were to be discharged; but these debts might be of a very different description from what the spirit of an act of parliament could embrace.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that in voting for the committee, he did not at all pledge himself to vote for whatever sums might be found still undischarged. Possessing, as he did, the strongest attachment to the Prince, he should not support the motion, if he did not think that the result would be highly honourable to his conduct. Some gentlemen seemed extremely desirous of arguing, that any addition to the income of the Prince of Wales, was an addition to the burthens of the people. What the state of the account was between his Royal Highness and the public, he professed not to know. This, however, he did know, that during the last session, his Royal Highness laid before the House a proposition for considering the amount of his claims. It was not then denied that an account ought to be taken; all that was contended for was, that the matter was one for the decision, not of the legislature, but of a court of law. In deference to this decision, his Royal Highness prepared a petition, which was laid before the lord chancellor, and the matter was put into a train of adjudication. It did not appear that his Royal Highness had discovered any unwillingness to proceed with the suit, or that he had submitted any overture for receiving 60,000*l.* as a condition of relinquishing all further proceedings. But when his Royal Highness had proceeded so far with his suit, ministers had stepped in with this proposition, as if they thought that his Royal Highness had sufficiently atoned for his offences. Twelve years were fixed on as the period of his probation; but exactly at the end of seven years and a half, when the amount of his claims on the public were about to be ascertained, when it was about to be determined whether such a sum was due to him as would enable him to resume his former dignity, a period was put to his state of humiliation, and a provision assigned him without the smallest explanation of so extraordinary a change. Of the causes of this change he knew nothing; but he now appeared, as a representative of the people, desirous of some explanation. But how was this explanation to be obtained, unless through the appointment of a committee of inquiry? This was the object of the motion. Did gentlemen who wished well to the monarchical part of the constitution think that no occasional burthens were to be submitted to, with the view of increasing its dignity, and supporting its splendor? Was not the splendor and the dignity which the heir apparent was enabled to keep up, essentially connected with the honour and the dignity of the monarchy? One hon. member had contended, that the prince of Wales had obtained from the public, at different times, upwards of 500,000*l.*, and that therefore, to talk of the sacrifices which had been made by his Royal Highness, was to offer an insult to the country. This, however, was an insult which might be very easily resented; and that was, by showing how the account actually stood. When the whole account came to be fully examined, he believed that scarcely one of these statements would be found to be correct. Among the articles charged on the Prince to the public were the expenses of his education. This, however, was totally incorrect; as the expenses of his education were defrayed, not out of the consolidated fund, but from the civil list. The receipts from the duchy of Cornwall were stated at 234,000*l.*; and to be deducted from this

Digitized by Google

sum he allowed the 125,000*l.* which had been given for the payments of his Royal Highness's debts. The sums expended in Carlton-house he could not allow to be fairly placed to his Royal Highness's account. If a prince of Wales was to be maintained at all, it was proper that he should be maintained in a style suited to his rank and prospects. He was not to be turned out into the world without some adequate provision. The whole amount of the sums which had been advanced for his Royal Highness being fairly considered, it would be found, that he was the least expensive Prince of Wales that ever existed. If the accounts were fairly balanced, it would, he was persuaded, be found, that 30,000*l.* was the amount of the whole of what had been advanced by the public by extraordinary grants. True it was, that his Royal Highness had an annual revenue of 125,000*l.* assigned to him in 1795. But this was what, from his rank and situation, he had an indisputable right to possess. If, in 1738, the grandfather of his Royal Highness enjoyed a clear income of 100,000*l.*, 125,000*l.* would not be reckoned too large in 1803. Economy was the cry perpetually from some members; but the manner in which this economy operated was rather singular. These economical gentlemen had, without the least evidence, granted 60,000*l.* to his Royal Highness, on the mere credit which they attached to the assertions of ministers. They granted the money, but they would hear nothing of a motion for inquiry. But had these scrupulous and economical gentlemen never heard any thing of the increase of the salaries of persons in public offices during the few last years? He did not mention this with any view of objecting to the increase; for, whatever were the views of economy which he encouraged, he had, on all occasions, been an advocate for a liberal provision to those employed in the public service. A long series of acts of kindness, on the part of his Royal Highness, had impressed his mind with the warmest gratitude; but at present he appeared merely in the performance of his public duty. He stood up for the support of the dignity and splendor of his Royal Highness; but he would be the advocate of this dignity and splendor only so far as they were consistent with the duty which he owed to his constituents.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, that the present motion was to him a matter of extreme regret. It could not be necessary to declare, that it was made without the countenance of his Royal Highness. With regard to the message, with the proceeding upon it, and the share which his majesty's servants had in that proceeding, it was proper he should relate how the matter stood. Before that message was presented to the House, he thought it his duty to make his Royal Highness acquainted with it; and he had the satisfaction to say, that his Royal Highness entirely approved of it. With respect to the accounts which were stated to the House relative to his Royal Highness's incumbrances, he caused that statement to be submitted to his Royal Highness, together with the motion intended to be made. His Royal Highness was pleased to adopt the motion; and he conformed himself (as far as was consistent with his duty) to the wishes of his Royal Highness in every particular. He would not contend that the House was not at liberty to assent to the motion; but he would say, that it could not regularly be followed up by any efficient vote, without a recommendation from the crown. Now he had not received the authority of his majesty to recommend such a measure, and if a motion were made for the appointment of a committee, he should consider it to be his duty to withhold that recommendation. It was impossible for the House to suppose that his majesty, in the message of the 16th February, had it in contemplation to refer to any debts contracted by the Prince since 1795. These debts, if there were any, might be such as it would be highly honourable to his Royal Highness to wish to discharge, but they were debts which it was impossible for that House to examine. It would be disgraceful to have entered on the Journals a third proceeding for the payment of debts.—There was another point adverted to this night, and to which he referred with extreme pain; he meant the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall. One hon. gentleman had said, that the Prince had not been any burthen to the public. He knew that this question never could be put in that House in the invidious shape of which it was capable; gentlemen said, that this was an application, not to the liberality, but the justice of the House, and that his Royal Highness had made a great sacrifice in this case; for that if he had proceeded in his claim, the result would have enabled him to pay all

Digitized by Google

his debts, and that he ought to be in a better situation than he will be placed by the bill before parliament. Now, with respect to the right, it was a point on which he did not think himself capable of forming a perfect opinion. The solicitor-general had spoken upon the question as a point in which there would be no difference of opinion after full consideration. Now, his learned friend was not right if he imagined there was no difference of opinion; for the learned lord, at the head of the law in England had expressed an opinion unfavourable to the claim of right. He might entertain some doubts upon the question; but certain it was, he had never expressed any opinion in favour of the claim of right. With regard to the learned lord at the head of the law in Ireland, he had never expressed any opinion in favour of this petition of right. It was therefore a little too much to say there was an unanimity of opinion among the most learned men upon this very intricate question. He could only say for himself, that had there been no proceeding whatever on the subject matter of the petition of right, if he had never heard of it, he should have been of opinion, that the Prince, under all the circumstances, ought to have had that which had been lately voted him.—The whole of the money expended by his majesty, and advanced out of the civil list, during the minority of the prince of Wales, was 195,000*l.* The sum of 5,000*l.* being allowed for the first nine years, the whole charge became 250,000*l.*; exceeding the receipts of the duchy during that period, by 17,000*l.* This being the state of the account, was it probable that those who opposed this motion, did so, from any apprehension of the result? For if his Royal Highness was entitled to the proceeds of the duchy of Cornwall, and that had been sufficient, there would not have been any provision for him out of the civil list, which was made to him from 1773 to 1783. From 1783 down to 1787, his majesty advanced on account of the Prince, out of the civil list, at the rate of 50,000*l.* a year, and from that period down to the present, his majesty advanced out of the civil list 60,000*l.* amounting in all to 1,600,000*l.* He was compelled also to state, that the money that had been deducted from that sum which had been once voted to the Prince of Wales to support his rank, and applied to the payment of his debts, amounted to 800,000*l.* principal and interest. Under these circumstances, it was too much to have it charged on ministers, or parliament, that there had been withheld from his Royal Highness that which he clearly ought to have, and that he had made sacrifices to the public. That the public interest was recognized in the public dignity of the Prince of Wales, he admitted; yet it was of less importance to the honour of the Prince himself, as well as to all other interests, that there should be a delay in his resuming his external dignity, than that the parliament should forfeit its consistency in recognizing debts of which they had no knowledge, and which they were bound to presume had no actual, since they could not have any legal existence; for, if the account given in the year 1795 was accurate, his Royal Highness could have no debts. He was, therefore, supporting the consistency of parliament, in resisting a proceeding by which parliament would recognise debts that, by its own previous proceedings, it could not suppose to exist. But he was perfectly convinced, after what was past, that, on the part of his Royal Highness, there would be no encouragement held out to this motion, by those who were in his confidence.

Mr. *Fox* said, that of all the objections against this motion, the one which appeared to him the most extraordinary was, that it was an indirect motion. It appeared to him one of the most direct and plain that ever was made, and one that resulted naturally and necessarily from the documents before the House. He was also not a little surprised at some of the doubts which had been thrown out, particularly with respect to that great and fundamental principle, that no money could be granted without a recommendation from the throne. In the first place, this was not an application for money; but surely the House must be aware that this principle, like many others, was liable to exceptions, because the House did frequently, by means of address, and in other ways, make grants of money without recommendations from the crown. But, without having recourse to that argument, it seemed to him that the message completely warranted the mode of proceeding now proposed. The purport of the message was, that the House should adopt such measures as appeared to them proper to promote the comfort and support the dignity of the Prince of Wales. The tendency of this motion, then, was

Digitized by Google

evidently to follow the directions, and comply with the spirit of that message. If, after an inquiry, it should appear that the obstacles to the Prince resuming his splendor were of a nature such as the foreign debt alluded to, he should concur in any proposition for removing it. With regard to the deduction of 10 per cent, he thought also, that if that was one of the obstacles, it ought to be removed; but if they consisted of debts contracted since 1795, he was of opinion that the House was not bound to remove them. The right hon. gentleman had said, that considerable doubts existed among great law authorities with regard to the Prince's claims. That upon such a subject there should be doubts was not astonishing; but it appeared, even from the right hon. gentleman's statement, that the preponderance of legal opinion was in favour of the Prince's claim. Speaking, however, as a common man, and not as a lawyer, he would say, that his majesty could not be advised to come into a court of justice, and say in answer to the Prince's claim, "It is true that I received the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall; but then I educated the Prince of Wales handsomely, and gave him the same masters that I gave my other sons; and therefore I must be paid for it." Such a plea could never be made. It was too much to say that the Prince's claim had been abandoned, because he could make nothing of it. He wished to ask, whether the suit had not made some progress, and whether a wish had not been expressed to his Royal Highness, that the proceedings should be delayed? So far from considering that there was any thing improper in the legal investigation of that question, he should, if he had been an adviser of the Prince, say, that it would be better that the question should be amicably discussed in a legal way.—He now came to what had been said about the necessity of the Prince living in the splendor due to his rank: he was one of those who did not think that the dignity of a Prince or monarch depended altogether upon the number of lords that he had in attendance; but still that kind of state was not to be considered as nothing; for though the succession was hereditary, yet virtues were not! and, however convinced the House might be of the virtues of the present sovereign and the heir apparent, yet they could not be sure that in future times princes might possess the same virtues; and, therefore, a proper provision ought to be made to support the dignity of persons in such exalted situations. In every point of view, however, in which he could consider this question, he could see no possible reason why an inquiry should not take place. If upon investigation it should appear, that a large sum was necessary to remove the incumbrances upon the Prince, perhaps he should not agree to it; if a small sum would be sufficient, he thought the House ought to grant it. Among the Prince's debts there was one that deserved consideration, and that was, the sums which had been laid out upon Carleton-house. His majesty had lent the Prince that House for a residence; but it was in such a state that it was absolutely necessary to expend a large sum upon it, and it should also be recollected, that the Prince had only 20,000*l.* given to him as a kind of outfit in life, so that it was obvious that he must get considerably in debt. With regard to the debts of the civil list, they had been frequently paid; and upon no other ground than the great increase in all the articles of life. This he thought was a bad mode of proceeding; because if you increased the incomes of princes when the price of the articles of life were dear, they would find it very difficult to lower them when the prices fell. It had always been considered as bad policy (he meant nothing disrespectful in the observation) to raise the wages of servants when provisions were dear, because it was hardly ever possible to reduce them when provisions were cheap. The whole effect of this motion was, to go into an inquiry; the House, by assenting to it, would not pledge itself to any payment.

Colonel *Grosvenor* hoped that something would immediately be done to enable his Royal Highness to resume that kind of establishment in which his birth, and the nature of the constitution required him to be placed.

Sir *W. W. Wynn* was of opinion that throughout the whole of the transaction hir Royal Highness had been extremely ill used. He hoped the hon. mover would exert his best endeavours to accomplish the object he had in view.

Mr. *Erskine* observed, in explanation, that he was wholly ignorant of the object of the present motion, until it was stated to the House, for which he should certainly, as an independent member of parliament, give his vote, and not at all under

Digitized by Google

any influence derived from his situation under the Prince. Much had been said concerning the different opinions respecting his Royal Highness's claims to the revenue of the duchy during his minority; all he could say was, that he had never been absent but once when they were under consideration, and that whilst he was present no one professional gentleman had given a decided opinion against them—not even a learned lord, then attorney general, and who now so ably presided in the highest court of law; but those opinions, to whatever side they might incline, were wholly foreign to the present question, it being fit, independently of all legal controversy, that parliament should enable the king to fulfil his parental intention respecting his son's situation; and if the sum already granted was not sufficient to enable his Royal Highness to support the dignity of his station, the House should offer to his majesty the further means of accomplishing an object which the House and the nation seemed equally to desire and to expect.

Mr. *Canning* said, that, in voting for it, he did not intend to pledge himself to concur in the recommendation of the committee. When he was informed of the sum to be proposed, and of the object to which it was to be applied, then he might be able to say whether the object was worth that sum or not. All he now knew was, that the sum proposed was inadequate to the attainment of the object, the accomplishment of which the House had in view.

Mr. *Sheridan* hoped the previous question would be withdrawn, that the House might come to a candid declaration on a subject upon which there seemed to be so little difference of opinion. What, he would ask, was the original ground upon which the House was induced, a few days since, to adopt any proceeding on this business? A message from his majesty, graciously recommending to the consideration of parliament the affairs of his Royal Highness, with a view to the improvement of his comforts, and the resumption of his dignity. Without inquiry, 60,000*l.* per annum was voted, in conformity to the tenor and spirit of the royal message. The House, however, was since in possession of a communication from his Royal Highness, declaring that, notwithstanding the wishes of his majesty and parliament that he should resume the dignity appropriate to his rank, and notwithstanding the liberality of parliament, he must defer the resumption of that dignity, on account of debts, to the discharge of which he considered himself bound in honour. Here, then, were documents sufficient for the House to proceed upon. What, then, was the motive proposed by the original motion this night? merely to inquire what was the nature of the impediment which prevented his Royal Highness, with such aid, from the immediate resumption of his dignity; or how far short the sum already voted, actually fell of the means for completely disembarrassing his Royal Highness. In point of consistency, it was impossible to refuse the inquiry. An hon. member (Mr. Johnstone) had opposed all inquiry or further extension of national generosity on this head; and had gone into an arithmetical calculation to prove, that his Royal Highness had no claims upon the country, and that, upon a fair balance of accounts, there was a charge against him on the ground of the Cornish revenues. But though the hon. member piqued himself upon his flippancy in figures, his argument was a little of the latest. On the night when he could have offered it in time, the hon. member held his tongue. The hon. member, too, with great sagacity, had found out, that in 1795, when a former arrangement had been made by the House, a spirit of Jacobinism prevailed, and therefore it became necessary to support the dignity of the crown, without regard to expense. It was, however, an argument rather strange, that it was only during the reign of Jacobinism that monarchy was supported in its fullest splendor; but that now, when Jacobinism was exploded, the necessity for supporting the dignity of the royal family should completely cease, and that cold calculation and rigid economy were to resume their domination. He had somewhere read a story of a grave conversation between two venerable owls, in a ruined temple, situated in the dominions of an ancient tyrant, in which one bird said to the other, "Long live the good king Ambrose! so long as he lives to carry on his devastations, we owls shall never want ruins to build our nests in." So might the royal family say, "Long live the Jacobins! for so long as their influence obtains, we shall enjoy all the dignity and splendor appropriate to our rank; but the moment the love of monarchy resumes its place in the hearts of the people, we shall

†

Digitized by Google

be thrown on the shelf, and all farther necessity for maintaining our respect and dignity be utterly exploded." The hon. member had said, that the items for the Prince's education ought to be charged against him. The fact was, the Prince was no more chargeable on this ground than the duke of York, or any other of the royal branches with whom he participated in the same nursery, and the same preceptors; and what could be more ungracious than to charge his Royal Highness's infancy with so much for cradle, so much for pap, so much for coral, and so much for school-books? But the fact was, that this account had nothing to do with the business; as the whole of these charges were defrayed out of her majesty's privy purse, with that maternal tenderness that ever distinguished her royal character. The hon. baronet, who moved the previous question had very sagaciously discovered, that to support the dignity of the heir apparent, nothing more was necessary than the inherent virtues of his Royal Highness, and that the pomp and trappings of state were all nonsense and useless expense. Be it so. He had no objection to admit the principle of the hon. baronet, provided the principle was applied generally to all the branches of the royal family, and to all the great officers of state, instead of being confined merely to the heir apparent. The saving to the nation would, no doubt, be considerable, by the substitution of personal virtue for official grandeur. "For instance, Sir," (said Mr. Sheridan), "you whom I have the honour to address, might dispense with the expensive splendor of that elegant house which is now building for you, and all the state attached to your official suite whenever you are to obey the orders of this House: in going up to present an address to his majesty, you will have no occasion to take with you that shining bauble which is here the symbol of your power, nor to travel in that splendid gewgaw the gilded coach, at present an appendage of your office. You have only to walk to St. James's, wrapt up in your virtues and a warm surtout; and if it should rain, you will have the privilege of carrying an umbrella. There will be no occasion for all the state attached to the movements of our judges on circuit; they can travel in the mail-coaches, and the bar can move as outside passengers, if they should not prefer the salutary exercise of walking. The chief magistrate of our metropolis will have no farther occasion to display all the splendor, finery, and raree-show attached to his office, which has been hitherto the wonder of foreigners, as the symbols of your national wealth and civic dignity. You will then hear no more of Mansion-house banquets, of turtle and venison feasts, of gorgeous processions on lord mayor's days, of aquatic trips from Black-friars to Westminster, in gilded barges, with bands of music, and civic regalia. No; the lord mayor and sheriffs may proceed to St. James's in hackney coaches, and dine on their return at Dolly's chop-house, instead of banquetting at Guild-hall [loud laughter]. In short, Sir, by extending this saving system to secretaries, and under-secretaries of state, and various other officers, you may save money; but I question much if you will thereby improve the popular respect for the state, or any thing which belongs to it."—Was it, he would ask, a wise economy, while income was increased not only to every other banch of the royal family, and every office and department of the state, to hold restriction only on that illustrious personage, in whom we contemplated a successor to the crown, and who was not only debarred thus from resuming his rank, but from the means of returning the common hospitalities of the nobility of the land, in a manner befitting his station? Mr. S. concluded by expressing his high approbation of the dignified manner in which his Royal Highness relinquished all further claims to the arrears on the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall, in consequence of the arrangement made by the House of Commons; and which arrangement was publicly avowed as by no means a compromise, with a view to stop the proceedings in the suit commenced by his Royal Highness on the advice of that House. Never was prince better advised on any occasion by his law officers.

Lord *Hawkesbury* contended, that if ministers did not concur in the present motion, it was because they did not imagine it calculated to accomplish the object which the House had in view. His object in rising was, to observe on the manner in which some gentlemen seemed to understand his majesty's message. There was nothing in that message that went to show that upon the sum of 60,000*l.* being granted to the Prince, his Royal Highness would be obliged immediately to resume his household, and the

Digitized by Google

state and splendor that should accompany it. The words of the message warranted no such meaning. In conformity to the royal recommendation, parliament had agreed to grant his Royal Highness the sum of about 70,000*l.* to relieve him from his difficulties, and to promote his comfort; but nothing appeared, either in the message or the proceedings of parliament upon it, which made it a necessary consequence that the Prince should immediately resume his household. It was true, indeed, that his right hon. friend was desirous that his Royal Highness should be restored to the situation in which he stood previous to the arrangement in 1795; but with all the respect which was due to the feelings of his Royal Highness, was the House prepared to take cognizance of debts, with the nature of which it could not be supposed to be acquainted; or rather, would not their wisdom dictate to them that they should not open any new account of debts whatever? And, in that opinion, they surely would not press upon his Royal Highness the necessity of resuming his household, until the debts which he felt to weigh upon his honour were fully discharged.

Lord *Castlereagh* should beg leave to call the attention of the House to the two objections which more immediately pressed upon his mind. The first was, the want of the distinct authority of his Royal Highness. The messages which had been communicated to the House, the proceedings instituted in consequence of them, were fresh in the recollection of gentlemen; and he would ask those who opposed the previous question, whether they could, after the sentiments expressed on the part of the Prince, establish the proposed committee of inquiry? It had also been stated, that the original motion was not sanctioned by his Royal Highness's authority. Since, therefore, the Prince was not a party in the question which was so earnestly pressed, would it be delicate to agree to an inquiry? The investigation might lead to facts which it might not be proper to disclose. There were, he was convinced, many circumstances of a nature which ought not to become the subject of inquiry. The grounds upon which the House had hitherto acted with respect to the provision made, both for his Royal Highness's dignity and comforts, and for the payment of his debts, were public grounds; and he trusted they would not be easily relinquished.

The previous question being put, That that question be now put, the House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Mr. Calcraft	139
	Sir William Geary	
Noes	Mr. Curwen	184
	Sir Robert Buxton	

So it passed in the negative.

List of the Minority.

Andrews, M. P.	Grosvenor, T.
Aubrey, sir J.	Gower, lord G. L.
Amyatt, J.	Giles, D.
Adair, R.	Graham, colonel
Alcock, W. C.	Gunning, G.
Acheson, hon. A.	Huntingfield, lord
Baring, sir F.	Hurst, J.
Bernard, T.	Hilliard, E.
Brogden, J.	Hughes, L. H.
Birch, J.	Harrison, J.
Beaumont, R.	Hamilton, H.
Bunbury, sir C.	St. John, hon. St. A.
Bent, R.	Kensington, lord
Barclay, sir R.	King, hon. E.
Butler, hon. J.	Lemon, J.
Butler, hon. C.	Ladbroke, R.
Bagenal, W.	La Touche, R.
Barlow, F. W.	La Touche, J.
Barlow, H.	La Touche, P.
Boucherett, A.	La Touche, D.
Burdett, sir F.	Lubbock, J.
Barclay, G.	Lemon, sir W.
Bligh, T.	Lenox, C.
Bampfylde, sir C.	Lamb, hon. P.
Bouverie, hon. E.	Lawley, sir R.
Bouverie, hon. E.	Macmahon, J.
Cartwright, W. R.	Milbanke, sir R.
Creevey, T.	Mathew, lord
Canning, rt. hon. G.	Milner, sir W.
Cowper, hon. Spencer	Monckton, hon. E.
Calvert, N.	Madocks, W. A.
Caulfield, hon. H.	Manners, lord R.
Clephane, W.	Manners, lord C. S.
Curzon, hon. R.	Milford, L.
Coke, T. W.	Moore, G. P.
Carberry, lord	M'Dowall, colonel
Courtenay, J.	North, Dudley
Dillon, hon. H.	Northey, W.
Dundas, hon. L.	Noel, G. Noel
Dundas, hon. C.	Newcomen, hon. J.
Dundas, hon. G. H.	Ord, W.
Dundas, C.	Osborne, J.
Dent, J.	O'Brien, sir E.
Dupre, James	Odell, W.
Erskine, hon. T.	Oliver, C. S.
Elford, sir W.	Paget, lord
Falkiner, F. J.	Porter, G.
Fox, hon. C. J.	Petty, lord H.
Fonblanque, J.	Porchester, lord
Fuller, J.	Palk, sir L.
Fitzpatrick, rt. hon. R.	Palk, W.
Folkestone, lord	Patter, P.
Forrester, Cecil	Paget, hon. E.
Fellowes, R.	Ridley, sir M.

Digitized by Google

Russel, lord W.	Thellesom, C.
Ross, sir C.	Thoroton, T.
Richardson, J.	Tierney, G.
Stanley, lord	Vereker, C.
Spencer, lord R.	Vaughan, H. J.
Sheridan, R. B.	Wrottesley, sir J.
Smith, T.	Wynn, sir W. W.
Smith, A.	Weston, C. C.
Somerville, sir M.	Willet, J. W.
Somerset, lord C.	Ward, hon. J.
Sibthorpe, H.	Wynn, C.
Shum, G.	Walpole, hon. G.
Shakespeare, A.	Wharton, J.
Smith, W.	Wilkins, W.
Tyrwhitt, T.	TELLERS.
Tarleton, B.	Calcraft, J.
Taylor, C.	Geary, sir W.

The Prince of Wales's Annuity bill passed the Commons on the 7th. On the 14th it was read a second time in the House of Lords; previously to which lord Pelham made some observations on the length of time, the prince had lived in a state of comparative obscurity; and the universal wish that seemed now to pervade the House, and the public, that he should be relieved from his difficulties. Lord Moira stated, that on account of debts, which the Prince found binding upon him, both in honour and in justice, he was prevented even now from resuming his state and dignity; but felt grateful to parliament, and content with the allowance they had made him; and had instructed his counsel to drop the proceedings respecting the duchy of Cornwall. The Earl of Carlisle felt, that this provision was not sufficient to enable his Royal Highness to resume his state; but in the present circumstances of the country, he thought no more could be done. The Earl of Darnley was of the same opinion, but did not consider the situation of the country so perilous as to justify despondency. The Duke of Norfolk thought the allowance for the Prince insufficient; and that a person of his elevated rank in the state, ought not to be left in a situation, where he was eclipsed by many lords and commoners. Lord Caernarvon disapproved of the bill, as inadequate to its object, and as unconstitutional, in getting rid of the Cornwall claims, which was a civil list debt, without any inquiry. The Earl of Moira denied that the abandonment of the Cornwall claims was at all the effect of a compromise: his Royal Highness had made that claim for the benefit of his creditors, but when he found that the allowance now proposed would enable him to satisfy his debts, without recurring to it, he abandoned it with pleasure.—The bill was then read a second time, and ordered to be committed.—The original proposition which had been made by ministers, for giving the prince of Wales an annuity of 60,000*l.* per annum for three years was the final settlement of this important business: for in a few days after, an event took place, which caused the Prince to signify to the House by Mr. Erskine, his chancellor, that he could not think at such a time, of increasing the burthens of the country; and that he was perfectly satisfied with what parliament had done.

Debate in the Commons on the Nottingham Election Bill.] March 16. Mr. *Hawkins Browne*, from the select committee who were appointed to try and determine the merits of the petition of Daniel Parker Coke, esq., and also of the petitions of the several other persons, complaining of an undue election and return for the town and county of the town of Nottingham, informed the House, that the said select committee have determined that Joseph Birch, esq. and Daniel Parker Coke, esq., are not duly elected; and that the last election for Nottingham is void, with respect to one of the burgesses to serve in parliament for the same.—And also, that the said petitions, and the opposition of Joseph Birch, esq. thereto, did not appear to the said committee to be frivolous or vexatious.

Mr. *Hawkins Browne* also acquainted the House, that the said select committee had come to the following Resolutions:

1. That it appears to this committee, that John Allen, being the returning officer at the last election for Nottingham, acted contrary to his duty in opening a poll, and proceeding to take the votes of electors for the period of about an hour, and until forty-four electors had polled, there being, during the whole of that time, no third candidate. 2. That after the first day of the said election, the freedom of the election was grossly violated, by disturbances and riots, accompanied with personal intimidation and violence, practised and continued during the six subsequent days of polling. 3. That the petitioner D. P. Coke, esq., after sustaining several insults, and suffering personal violence, was obliged, from the just apprehension of hazard to his life, to leave the place, and could not venture to return; and that a large number of electors in his interest were de-

Digitized by Google

terred from exercising their franchise of voting. 4. That John Davison, the mayor, and Joseph Oldknow, and Thos. Oldknow, two of the aldermen of Nottingham, took no effectual means to preserve the freedom of election, or restore it when so violated, or to punish the offenders. 5. That it appears to this committee, by an entry in the corporation book of Nottingham, that at a common hall, held on Thursday the 8th of January last past (after reciting the petitions referred to this committee), it was 'Resolved, that this corporation 'will defray all such legal expenses as 'have already been, or shall hereafter be 'incurred by them the said J. Davison, 'J. Oldknow, T. Oldknow, and J. Allen, 'or either of them, or George Coldham, 'under their direction, in preparing for, 'or making their defences; and that the 'chamberlains for the time being be 'hereby authorized and directed, from 'time to time, to advance Mr. Coldham 'all and every such sum and sums of 'money as may be necessary for this 'purpose.'

It appearing that the mayor and aldermen have, by charter, an exclusive jurisdiction within the town and county of the town of Nottingham, and the committee thinking it highly expedient to provide some better security than is likely to be provided by the corporation of Nottingham, to preserve the peace within the said town and county thereof, and to prevent the repetition of the same disgraceful scenes; Resolved, 1. "That it is the opinion of this committee, that the House be moved for leave to bring in a bill to give the magistrates of the county of Nottingham concurrent jurisdiction with the magistrates of the town and county of the town of Nottingham. 2. That unless such or some other measure to the like effect be taken previously to the next election for Nottingham, there is no reasonable hope that a free election can be had. 3. That the evidence adduced before this committee be laid before the House for its consideration. 4. That it appears to this committee, that Alexander Foxcroft was employed to procure signatures to one of the petitions referred to this committee, namely, that signed by 537 petitioners, and containing the following allegations:—'That at the said 'election they had determined to poll for 'the said D. P. Coke, but that such was 'the violence of the mob, systematically 'regulated and conducted for the purpose, that they were completely intimidated, and thereby prevented from polling for the said D. P. Coke.—That the 'said John Davison, the mayor, John 'Allen, the sheriff, T. Oldknow and J. 'Oldknow, two of the aldermen of the 'said town, and who, by virtue of their 'offices, were magistrates, frequently attended on the hustings, and were repeatedly applied to, to preserve the 'peace of the place, and the freedom of 'election; but the said magistrates took 'no effectual steps to prevent any of the 'violent or illegal acts which took place 'at the said election.'—5. That the said A. Foxcroft stated to those who signed that petition, that it was a petition for those who would have voted for Mr. Coke, but he admitted that the major part of them were not acquainted with the allegations against the magistrates and sheriffs, and that about sixteen of those who signed the petition were, to his knowledge, not at Nottingham at the time of the election."

The said report was ordered to be taken into consideration on the 20th of April; and Mr. Speaker was directed not to issue his warrant for a new writ.

April 20. The House proceeded to take the said report into consideration. The first resolution was postponed; the second, third, and fourth were agreed to; and the subsequent ones were postponed. After which,

Mr. *Hawkins Browne* recapitulated the circumstances of the shameful riots which had been permitted to go on in Nottingham during the late election, not only to the alarm of the peaceable inhabitants and the personal injury of many individuals, but to the total violation of every thing like the freedom of election. Whether those riots proceeded from a neglect of duty on the part of the magistrates, or from the inadequacy of the powers vested in their hands, it would not now be relevant to inquire; it was obvious, however, that some step was necessary on the part of the House, in order to prevent the recurrence of such shameful disgraces. The purport of the bill, which he should move for leave to introduce, would be to appoint such officers to act in aid of the civil power during every future election, and to give such jurisdiction to the magistrates and the county at large, as should more effectually tend to preserve the peace of that town and its vicinage; and to preserve

Digitized by Google

the freedom of election. He then moved, "That leave be given to bring in a bill for the more effectually preserving the peace, and securing the freedom of election in the town of Nottingham."

Mr. *Pierrepont* bore his testimony to the shameful state of riot and outrage in which he himself found that town, on his visit there during the election; a state of riot and outrage so utterly uncontrollable by the civil power, as to render the interference of a military force absolutely indispensable. Such proceedings were not only violatory of the freedom of election, but dangerous to the lives of the peaceable inhabitants, and disgraceful to a civilised country. The magistrates he would not charge with actually encouraging the rioters, but he would state, that they stood by as idle and indifferent spectators, without making due exertions for the suppression of those riots. He, therefore, most cordially approved of the bill.

Mr. *Fox* said, that whatever measure the House should think fit to adopt on this occasion, he trusted they would not be satisfied to support it upon mere assertion, however respectable the quarter the information came from. If what was alleged by the hon. gentleman was founded, then were the committee most grossly defective in their duty. But if he was to form his opinion upon the evidence before that committee, he could find no such charge substantiated. On the contrary, those magistrates deserved thanks, for having done every thing in their power to preserve the peace, without having the desired effect. It appeared that they had given every aid which the civil power could possibly afford; and if that was unsuccessful, the fault was not theirs. The chief charge against the mayor was, that he was averse to seeing the election booth surrounded by a military force, and the electors constrained to give their votes under the intimidating influence of a body of armed soldiers; a thing which must be allowed directly to militate against the letter and spirit of every election act, and of the British constitution itself. It appeared also, on the minutes of the committee, that an uncontrollable spirit of riot had prevailed upon former elections in that town. Therefore, though he fully agreed that some bill was necessary, he could not see the justice of implicating the magistrates. But whatever measure was adopted, he trusted that no power of so obnoxious a nature would be given, as that of calling in a military force. He had heard an instance quoted by a very eloquent member of this House, of an election carried on at Brussels, within a hollow square of the French army; but he trusted never to hear of an election for a member of that House carried on upon such principles.

Mr. *Bond* coincided with those who had stated the shameful riots which existed at Nottingham during the election, to which he was himself a witness, and many atrocious instances of which he recapitulated; particularly, that a cant phrase was in common use, by which every person whose conduct or principles were held obnoxious to the opinions of a self-appointed tribunal of the Nottingham mob, was threatened with a complaint to "punch;" or that "punch," would visit them for it; the obvious meaning of which was, that the land, garden, orchard, cattle, or any out-door property of the party liable to depredation, was sure to be despoiled or plundered; and this passed without any material interference of the magistrates. He wished, therefore, to see the jurisdiction extended to the magistrates of the county at large, that the aid of the *posse comitatus* might be resorted to. He could not conceive upon what ground the hon. member who spoke last gave his opposition to a measure so necessary.

Leave was given to bring in the bill.

April 25. Mr. Fox presented a petition against the bill, from the mayor and corporation of Nottingham, who stated, that it would be a virtual censure upon, and degradation of, the corporation, without any imputation of delinquency; and a violation, in the persons of the magistrates, of those rights and privileges, which Nottingham had enjoyed for nearly 400 years.

April 29. On the order of the day for the second reading, Mr. Serjeant Lens appeared at the bar, and was heard against the bill. After which, the bill was read a second time.

Mr. *Hawkins Browne* said, that the evidence not only proved that dreadful riots took place during the last election, but on all similar occasions in that town. The bill went to put an end to those scenes of disorder. He did not see a single evil that could arise from the bill, and should therefore move, that it be committed on Monday.

Digitized by Google

Mr. *Henderson* said, that the object of the bill seemed to be to increase the magistrates of Nottingham. It was, in effect, to annul its charter. Now, by the 27th Hen. 8th, c. 24, the crown had the sole right of appointing justices. Though Nottingham was locally situated in the county of Nottingham, it was, by its charter as distinct from it as the county of York. The proper mode of attaining the end of the bill appeared to him to be, to bring in a bill to enable his majesty to repeal so much of the charter of Nottingham as gives an exclusive jurisdiction to the corporate magistrates; and thence, by the common law, the county magistrates would have a right to exercise jurisdiction in the town.

Mr. *Fox* entered into a defence of the Nottingham magistracy, and protested against the use of the word 'lenity,' as applied to those gentlemen—it was insulting and unjust. They were ready to answer any charges that could be brought forward. They desired to know the nature of their guilt, if any could be alleged, and the degree to which they were guilty? But this was not done. They were not to be taken before any legal tribunal; but they were to suffer, from a kind of punishment which excluded trial and defence. Did they request not to be prosecuted? No. Did they try to elude legal punishment? No. Why, then, talk of lenity? Those respectable magistrates were thus slandered by implication, and without any specific evidence to justify it. He wished the investigation of their character should be left to the laws, that if they had neglected their duty, they should be brought to the bar of the court of King's-bench; but that they should not be attacked in the smooth and lenient style in which some gentlemen had dealt. It was the duty of the committee to have ascertained and stated the degree of guilt which attached to the magistracy; it should not have expressed any doubt on the subject. The justice and dignity of parliament should forbid it. He would only ask of gentlemen to take a candid review of the conduct of the magistrates of Nottingham for some years back. It was perfectly true, that they had in many instances, like prudent men, yielded to some inconveniencies, rather than by resistance expose themselves to still greater. There existed in that town, two parties exceedingly hostile to each other—the Old Whigs and the Tories. The latter party, favourable to the views of government, had been in the habit of calumniating all its opponents, and particularly the corporation of the town. The house and mills of Mr. Davison, a most respectable gentleman, were attacked—so were the house and person of Mr. Oldknow; and they were obliged to endure it. The power of government was not with them. Those riots, however, provoked no legislative interference. The impotent corporation was left to suffer. There was no party spirit to induce any bill for their protection; but, in 1802, a pressing necessity for this important innovation on an old charter, is found to exist, in order, as it is professed, to secure the freedom of election. The bill went to establish a precedent for the invasion of ancient charters—to take from the people the appointment of their magistrates. It was not a measure merely drawn to meet and repress riots; but to give to magistrates appointed by the crown a concurrent jurisdiction with that of the corporation; and for the purpose, too, of giving a triumph to that party in the town which had never been found backward in rioting. This was the first case in which a popular tumult in any corporation town was made a pretence for invading the privileges of that corporation. As a proof of the police of this town, he would ask any of the judges who had gone that circuit for the last ten years, whether they knew of any town where a smaller number of crimes had been committed? Though during that space of time this town was under the government of some of the most enlightened men in the country, they were condemned to suffer from popular fury more severely, perhaps, than the members of any other party; but yet things went on as smoothly as in other towns agitated by opposite political parties, until the late election, when two candidates appeared; and if the sheriff had immediately returned them, or rather if Mr. Coke had not delayed in order to register some freemen, the House would have heard nothing of this bill. It is said that the magistrates did not give a due opposition to the riots which took place during the election; but it did not appear, in the minutes of the committee, that they were in any instance culpable. Did they refuse to do any thing which the friends of Mr. Coke requested? No; except that of calling in the military to surround the booth, not to secure the freedom of election, but to

Digitized by Google

dictate to the electors. Let them be charged with rejecting the application to make it a military election, and try the event; but don't let them be the victims of loose, indefinite accusations. What remedy could be derived from the interference of county magistrates in case of riots? What means could they employ different from, or better than, those in the power of the corporation? Was it supposed that the mere increase of the number of magistrates would answer; or was it proposed to call in the *posse comitatus* of the county to preserve the peace? Of this he could not approve; the bill, however, would be much less objectionable, if it authorised the interference of county magistrates only in case of riots. It did not follow, because on such occasions their assistance might be necessary, that therefore they were to participate in the whole municipal jurisdiction of the town. This would be a deviation from the old established policy of this country; for it would enable the magistrates of the king's appointment to rule over the magistrates of the people's election. It would be extending that dangerous power of the crown—dangerous he would call it, and the history of the nation had shown the danger of it, for the first attack of all those who meditated the subversion of British liberty was upon corporate towns, upon those charters which formed the best security of popular rights, and the most effectual control on ministerial power. Nottingham was about to lose its privileges for exercising its control. The independent spirit of its corporation was to be the cause of that privation. It was mockery to attribute it to riots; for riots had happened in almost every corporate town; and was that to be received as a reason for invading charters? Was it to be said, "because the peace of your town has been disturbed by an election riot; your corporate rights shall be done away, and we shall give the government of your town to the king's magistrates." Such was the language of the bill before the House. The provisions of this bill would not be quite so bad if they applied to riots only; if they were confined to that, yielding to bad times and to bad principles, he perhaps, though he would not like it, might not oppose it; but in its present shape it was utterly inconsistent with his ideas of justice or constitutional freedom.

Mr. *Bond* said, that the operation of the bill was not, to create any magistracy, but to extend the authority of a magistracy already created; and that an act of parliament may do this, without any invasion of the prerogative of the crown, he had many analogous cases to show. The preamble of the bill did not merely state the late riots at Nottingham, but took notice of many former riots; and the single question now propounded to the House, was, whether they should apply a remedy to that evil? If any member on reading the whole of the evidence, would say that the mayor of Nottingham deserved praise, he had a temper and a mode of thinking not to be envied. The magistrates of Nottingham were criminally responsible for their conduct at the late election; but there were many material circumstances of extenuation in their case; and therefore, it was his wish, that lenient measures should be adopted; but if he could have no remedy such as this bill proposed, he must pursue these magistrates as criminals. With regard to the justice of the case, he would inquire, whether this was an invasion of the rights of any parties? and if it was, whether it was strictly necessary? Confining the right of election to a few, might render that right valuable; but it was not for the value of it to a magistrate that the power was given to him; it was for the advantage of the place where he was to act; and if that advantage was not accomplished by the office being properly filled up, the interference of that House was necessary. This was particularly the case of corporations: from the nature of their constitutions, if their magistrates did not properly fill up their situations, they became a blot upon the character; for the inhabitants of a chartered corporation had none of the common privileges of another place. They were not like common subjects. To cure the evil of their magistrates' inefficiency, they had no advantages but their charter, which, if their magistrates did not do their duty, they could not enjoy; so that they might be said to be left out of the reach of the law. This was the case of the town of Nottingham. The truth was, that at Nottingham, they were used to riots. This was not only the case at an election for a member of parliament, but of every election whatever. It had been said, that the magistrates of Nottingham had received the thanks of the judges once; now, he had information that riots often happened

Digitized by Google

at the time of the assizes at Nottingham. It was said there was nothing like this bill to be found any where; whereas there were many cases analogous to this. The power of magistrates under charter had been increased where their power had been found deficient. This was the case of the borough of Leicester; the magistrates there had a power of concurrent jurisdiction over parts of the country. The same case applied to Clitheroe, where the magistrates of the borough interfere with those of the county, and this principle was recognised in a statute of Henry 7th, which he cited. There was also an Irish act, 38 Geo. 3rd, c. 78, by which the magistrates of the counties can go to all the boroughs to convict those who are guilty of selling spirituous liquors contrary to law. The Coventry case was likewise analogous. All these showed that parliament had interfered in the conduct of magistrates in boroughs, as well as in places without charters, when the public welfare could not be supported by these chartered customs. He must express an anxious wish, that independent gentlemen should act for Nottingham; and if that was not to be the consequence of the bill, it would be useless. But how could it be required, that a person who was to act as a magistrate under the authority of this bill, should take out a *dedimus potestatem*, for the purpose of merely running his head into a riot, without having any means of preventing it? Magistrates had much to do in a quiet way, as well as acting on occasions of actual riot. He believed, that if the House adopted this bill, they would adopt the best means that had yet been offered to remedy a considerable evil, and that the magistrates would become, what they ought to be, a protection to the good, and a terror to the wicked.

Mr. *Peter Moore*, in a maiden speech, said, that he thought the magistrates had neglected their duty in this case. He had witnessed some riotous proceedings at Coventry. In the business of Nottingham there was much to lament, and much to correct; but he saw nothing in the report upon this subject which the magistrates of that town were not now competent to correct. He thought that every necessary provision should be made to prevent the recurrence of the evil without overturning the constitution of the borough. There was nothing wanting but to awaken the magistrates out of their dormancy, and that was to be effected by making them feel the severities of the law, for criminally neglecting their duty.

Mr. *Grey* complained that the resolutions of the committee were deficient in precision. They made heavy charges against the magistrates of Nottingham, without specifying those parts of the evidence on which the charges were supported. He could not but consider the bill as a bill of disfranchisement. He wished to know distinctly in what the fault of the magistrates of Nottingham consisted? Was it in their want of power, or their want of inclination, to preserve the peace of the town? It had not been proved that they were censurable in either of these respects. The learned gentleman had spoken of the lenity of the bill. Now what was the situation of the parties to whom this boasted lenity was applied? Are they not men anxious that every part of their conduct should be investigated. But, in the absence of all conclusive testimony against them, labouring under a charge of the most foul and atrocious kind, and denied all opportunity or means of repelling, they deprecated a measure which went to deprive them of a most important constitutional privilege. In whatever point of view the subject was considered, the remedy proposed was inadequate. Was it meant to be said that the magistrates fomented disturbances? In support of so serious a charge, there was not a tittle of evidence. He had to say then, that during the absence of riots, there was no evidence of the inadequacy of the magistrates to preserve the good order of the town. All that was therefore necessary was, that additional power should be given when the existence of riots rendered the ordinary police of the town inadequate to the maintenance of tranquillity. He was therefore in favour of a clause to this effect.

Mr. *Rose* said, the bill was rendered indispensably necessary, not merely by recent occurrences, but by the successive history of riots, which he could trace to almost every former election at Nottingham, so far as 120 years back. In none of these cases did it appear that the magistrates were competent to preserve peace; and whether this incompetence arose from imbecility, negligence, or want of sufficient powers, some measure appeared to be indispensable, which should secure the peace of the town.

Digitized by Google

The bill was ordered to be committed on Monday.

May 3. On the order of the day for the third reading of the bill,

Mr. Fox said, that he considered it calculated for the future undermining of the laws of this country, by throwing an additional power into the hands of the executive.—Was the bill formed under the supposition of guilt or innocence? If not guilty, there was no occasion for parliamentary interference; if guilty, the laws were sufficient for their punishment. If the magistrates in the execution of their duty could not suppress such riots, the proper remedy would be, to enlarge their powers, by adding to their numbers, according to the constitution of that body; but by no means by the addition of others, where an elective magistracy had alone existed. It was a strong feature of the constitution, that the magistracy of this country was divided between the appointment of the crown and the right of election. The county magistrates were appointed by the crown, and in towns the magistracy was generally elective. It was said, that the inhabitants of Nottingham were not interested in this subject. Had men no interest in electing their magistrates, by whom they were to be governed? But you say the elective magistrates have not been able to do their duty. If Nottingham is said to be riotous, other places were equally so. If the magistrates were guilty, let them be tried. But it was a new principle, that if elective magistrates were guilty, those who had the right of election should be injured. He strongly objected to the jesuitism of the proposition, not to impute guilt, and yet to punish by rendering men objects of contempt. He objected to the bill as a precedent, which, if followed up, would not leave a corporation existing in the country. Riots had prevailed in almost every part of the country; and if, which God forbid, the riots of 1780 should again happen, it would be a ground for disfranchising even London.

After a short debate, the question being put, That the bill be now read a third time, the House divided:

Tellers

Yeas	Mr. Attorney general Mr. Bond	164
Noes	Mr. Grey Lord Geo. Cavendish	29

Proceedings against James Trotter for Contempt of the Orders of the House.] March 25. Lord Euston presented a petition from James Trotter, now a prisoner in the custody of the serjeant at arms, in consequence of not having obeyed the summons of the House to attend as a witness before the Dunfermline election committee. The petitioner acknowledged his fault; begged pardon of the House; declared he had erred from ignorance; that his absence from home was a great detriment to his private affairs; and prayed that he might be set at liberty. The noble lord then moved that he be brought up on Monday, in order to be discharged.—*Mr. Tierney* said, it was proper to consider how the rights of a petitioner might be affected, if a material witness refused to attend. The conduct of this man the House ought particularly to set its face against. It was more dangerous, as affecting the rights of election, than even perjury or prevarication. These could be detected, but nothing could compensate for a man's withholding his evidence altogether. If this man had been forthcoming, his evidence would have made a most material alteration in the decision of the committee. He should therefore move, that he be brought up, in order to be committed to Newgate for six months. A long conversation then took place, relative to the proceeding that ought to be adopted on this occasion. It was at last agreed, That J. Trotter should be brought to the bar of the House on Monday next.

March 28. James Trotter was heard in his defence. After he was taken from the bar, lord Euston moved, "That he be again brought to the bar, in order to his being discharged."

Mr. Tierney considered this punishment as altogether insufficient. He could by no means believe, that the prisoner could have remained so long ignorant of a summons, from such high authority, as the Speaker of the House of Commons, which was a thing that must have been spoken of, as a circumstance rather unusual in the neighbourhood. It was much more likely, that he was absent from his house to avoid being obliged to answer some questions he might be asked, about bribing a voter at Queen's Ferry. He thought, that he ought to be committed to Newgate; and should move a resolution, declaring the sense the House en-

Digitized by Google

testained of his conduct, and should follow that up, by a motion for committing him to Newgate.

Mr. *Sheridan* also thought an exemplary punishment should be inflicted upon him; he, himself, had confessed, that between the times of the service of the first and second warrants, he had returned to his family; and yet he had paid no attention to the warrant he had seen.

The *Lord Advocate* was against a severe punishment, on the ground, that there was no wilful contempt; but, that the prisoner might have really thought the first order needed not be obeyed, as he did not receive it till after the day on which it specified, that he ought to attend: he thought his confinement, his being brought up here, nearly 400 miles, and his expressions of sorrow, should weigh with the House, against inflicting a severe punishment.

Mr. W. Dundas and lord Dunlo thought, that under all the circumstances, of what he had already suffered, and his situation in life, he might now be reprimanded and discharged.

Mr. *Fox* said, that when he looked to all the circumstances of the case, he felt strongly the propriety of inflicting some very signal punishment on the prisoner for the crime of which he had been found guilty. He could not, indeed, conceive how any man who had the smallest respect for the privileges of the House, or the importance of a free and fair election, could possibly think of voting for the motion of the noble lord. He had no difficulty in saying that, in a moral point of view, prevarication and perjury were crimes of a more atrocious kind than that of which the prisoner stood convicted; but it was to be considered, that there were laws to which these crimes were amenable, and that the institutions of society had attached to them a punishment adequate to their enormity. Was it, however, so with the crime of which the prisoner had confessed his guilt. If it was not to be signally punished, where was the case to present itself when severity of punishment was to be employed? If the House were so far wanting to themselves as to suffer this crime to escape with impunity, there was no longer any protection for the rights of individuals in the exercise and enjoyment of the highest privilege of a free people What was the case now before the House? The prisoner says that he was duly served with the order for his attendance. Ignorance is not therefore the plea on which he rests his defence. He tells the House, however, very plainly, that, if he had known of the dangers of disobedience, he would, without hesitation, have complied with the order. The house were called on to consider well the nature of such a defence. If ignorance of the danger of disobedience was, in this instance, admitted, what could prevent the same plea from being set up in every other quarter? Bribery and corruption were to be severely punished. But would any man say that wilful absence was not equally criminal, when, in consequence of this absence, the existence of this bribery and corruption could not be established, and individuals were deprived of their just rights and privileges with regard to the national representation? If cases of this nature were once suffered to pass with impunity, witnesses, on points of the highest importance, might be kept back, and no redress for the injured party could be obtained. In certain circumstances, they might be kept back to prevent a most material subject from being brought to a full and fair investigation; and, in other instances, this absence might be useful to conceal the existence of practices which no principle of our constitution could sanction. Under such circumstances, it was only necessary for a candidate, however corrupt the manner in which his election was carried, to calculate the expense of keeping back material witnesses, and then the whole business of election would become a matter of mere calculation. On this plain ground, he was decidedly hostile to the original motion. It appeared to him that a case of manifest guilt had been made out against the prisoner, and therefore he should give his hearty concurrence to the amendment.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* dwelt on the importance of preserving the privileges of the House, and said, he could not consent to allow the prisoner, under all the aggravating circumstances of the case, to be discharged without a more exemplary punishment. He confirmed and illustrated the arguments of all the former speakers on the same side, and in the course of his argument discovered the extent of his knowledge of parliamentary proceedings.

Mr. *Ross* contended for a punishment,

Digitized by Google

in the present instance, far more severe than a simple reprimand. The crime was one pregnant with evil, and no time ought to be lost in showing the public that it was one which the legislature were determined to punish with severity.

Mr. *T. Grenville* delivered a warm speech in support of an exemplary punishment. He supported, with filial enthusiasm, the spirit and tendency of that bill, from which the public has derived such important advantages. A motion such as that which had been originally brought forward was one which would disgrace the Journals of parliament, and he therefore earnestly conjured the noble lord to withdraw it.

Lord Euston's motion was negatived: after which, the chancellor of the exchequer moved, "That so much of the minutes of the evidence taken before the select committee, as relates to the said James Trotter, be laid before the House;" which motion was agreed to.

April 4. After a short debate, the House, on the motion of Mr. Tierney, came to the following resolutions: "That James Trotter, now in the custody of the Serjeant at Arms, having been duly summoned by the Speaker's warrant, and also by an order, signed by the chairman of the select committee on the Dunfermline, &c. election, to attend to give evidence before the said committee, and having disobeyed such warrant and order, by not appearing in pursuance thereof, has been guilty of a breach of the privileges of this House." And it was ordered, *nem. con.* That the said James Trotter be, for his said offence, committed to Newgate. —Trotter continued in Newgate until the 6th of May, when he was reprimanded and discharged.

Lord Ellenborough's Maiming and Wounding Bill.] March 28. Lord *Ellenborough* reminded the House, that he had, on Friday last, moved to postpone the committal of the chalking bill for Ireland. He had done so, to introduce to their lordships a bill, for the purpose of explaining and amending the Coventry act, under which no man who wounded, maimed, or defaced another, could be convicted, unless the lying-in-wait, with a view to commit the offence was proved; and for want of that sort of proof, an atrocious offender had recently been acquitted at the Old Bailey. It had also for its object to generalize the law with regard to certain penal offences, and to adapt it equally to every part of the united kingdom. Among other provisions, he had introduced several to meet the defects and difficulties that now lay in the way of conviction for several offences of the most criminal nature. One went to constitute an assault with intent to commit murder, a capital felony, whereas at present it was only a misdemeanor. Another to make the attempting to fire a gun or pistol, with intent to kill, although the attempt failed by the weapon's missing fire, by flashing in the pan, or other accident, a capital felony. A third, to constitute the administering poison with intent to destroy, also a capital felony. Another to relieve the judges from the difficulties they labour under in respect to the trial of women indicted for child-murder, in the case of bastards. At present the judges were obliged to strain the law for the sake of lenity, and to admit the slightest suggestion that the child was still-born as evidence of the fact. Upon this point, the law, as it now stands, is so severe in a constructive view towards the mother of a bastard child, supposed to have been murdered after its birth, that in case of such child being found dead, or being made away with, the proof of the mother having previously concealed her pregnancy, is to be taken as sufficient to convict of the murder. A clause was therefore inserted in the present bill, repealing the law as it now stood, and re-enacting a proviso, requiring that evidence should first be duly admitted, that such bastard child was, or was not, born living, previous to the final decision upon any trial. Another provision went to the punishment of those guilty of administering drugs and potions to procure abortions. There was another crime highly atrocious, which was not capitally punishable by the laws of Ireland; namely, that of a man setting fire to, and burning his own house, with intent to defraud the insurers; for this species of arson, the capital punishment only attached where the fire extended to the house of his neighbour; but as it was a crime not only calculated to defraud one set of men as much as that of forgery, or of sinking a ship at sea, but with incalculable danger to the lives and properties of a whole neighbourhood, and consequently fraught, as much as any act could be, with the very essence of criminality, namely, deliberate inten-

†

Digitized by Google

tion and malice prepense, it was as deservedly to be ranked amongst capital crimes in Ireland, as in this country.

The bill was read a first time.

Debate in the Lords on the Irish Bank Restriction Bill.] May 8. On the order of the day for the second reading of the bill,

Lord *King* delivered his sentiments fully on the subject. He considered, that it was these restrictions, which, by encouraging an enormous issue of bank notes, had produced their depreciation, and finally the rate of exchange so unfavourable to Ireland. Country banks had not done so much mischief as was usually attributed to them; on the contrary, they had afforded great accommodations to the public, and he believed they were a salutary check upon the Bank of England, which was now much more careful and vigilant, as to its notes, than probably it otherwise would have been. The country banks were also an excellent check to forgery, which would seldom be detected, if there were no other notes circulating than those of the Bank of England. In Ireland, during the year 1797, the number of notes issued, amounted to only 600,000*l.*; and now there were no less than 2,600,000*l.* in circulation. This was a circumstance which sufficiently accounted for the balance of trade being so unfavourable. He thought the directors of the Bank of Ireland had grossly abused that discretionary power which had been vested in them; he should therefore move a clause in this bill, that the Bank of Ireland should be obliged to pay their own notes in those of the Bank of England, which would prove a check on the enormous issue they had lately made. He thought there ought not to be two standards of currency in the countries which were now united; he should not, however, propose that such a clause should operate sooner than six months from the present time.

The Earl of *Limerick* defended the conduct of the directors of the Bank of Ireland, who had been prudent, as well as vigilant in the discharge of their duty. The first great increase in the issues of the bank of Ireland, was in consequence of an effort of the conspiracy that was then forming, to distress the government by a run upon all the country banks, which must necessarily also produce a run on the bank of Ireland; it was to counteract this scheme, that they were first obliged to increase their issues. The bank of Ireland had, in spite of surrounding difficulties, of foreign invasion and rebellion, still kept up its credit, and given great accommodation to the public. He attributed the unfavourable state of exchange in a great measure, to the increase of the public debt, which was now 40 millions, although in 1797, it was but 7 millions.

Lord *Auckland* entirely coincided with what had fallen from the earl of Limerick; he therefore supported the bill, which was read a second time.

May 5. On the committal of the bill,

Lord *King* again adverted to the rate of exchange between the two countries, the unfavourable state of which to Ireland, he attributed to the depreciation of its currency naturally arising from the excessive issue of bank notes, which were the circulating medium. He concluded, by moving a clause, that the governor and company of the Bank of Ireland, should be obliged, upon demand, to pay their notes in English bank notes.

The Marquis of *Sligo* said, it was impossible to add such a clause as this, to a bill for restricting payments in specie; as the Bank of Ireland could not get those Bank of England notes, without paying guineas for them. Such a clause would militate against the whole principle of the bill. As to the rate of exchange, it perhaps carried with it its own remedy: the exchange operated as a tax upon imports, and a bounty upon exports. He admitted the very unfavourable circumstances in which Ireland now stood; but he hoped, that better prospects would soon appear.

The Earl of *Limerick* also disapproved of the clause, which was negatived.

Debate on Lord King's Motion respecting the Financial State of the Country.] May 18. Lord *King* rose to call their attention to the papers which had for some time been in their lordships' hands. It was a subject of the last consequence, that the erroneous ideas which had been spread among the monied interest, and the public in general, in consequence of a noble lord's statements, should be corrected. With this view, he had for some time been anxious, that the situation of the country, with respect to its finances, might be clearly ascertained. The noble

Digitized by Google

lord to whom he alluded (Auckland) had expressed himself in terms of exultation upon the astonishing increase of the revenue. That this exultation was well founded was not perhaps so evident as his lordship might imagine.—He then entered into a series of calculations, in order to prove the errors of lord Auckland's statements respecting the revenue and the charge upon it. The noble lord had stated the amount of the revenue to be upwards of 33 millions, with such a charge upon it as left a very considerable surplus in the hands of government to the public expenses of the year. It was evident, however, even from the papers upon their lordships' table, and from the speech of the chancellor of the exchequer lately published, that this statement was not correct. He then contended, that the amount of the revenue was little more than 31 millions. He then adverted to the erroneous statement made by the chancellor of the exchequer, and the fallacious views of the proportion between the revenue and the expenditure of the country, which he had held out. He next turned the attention of the House to the ruinous consequences that must result from the practice of peace loans, and asserted that the only remedy was, to equalize the revenue with the expenditure, however great. By a contrary conduct the danger must every day become more imminent. Nothing could be more pregnant with mischief than trifling with the finances of the country. What, then, were we to think of ministers who could be guilty of such gross mistakes, with regard to a point of such vast importance, or what confidence would the country repose in them? Persons who had so far misunderstood the finances of the country as to commit the gross and palpable mistakes which these papers and the statements of the ministry betrayed, were unfit to manage the concerns of the nation. He alluded to the weakness and instability of their conduct in every part of their administration, and concluded by moving that the financial papers on their lordships' table should be referred to a private committee, who should examine the same, and report their opinions thereon to the House.

Lord *Auckland* was thankful to the noble lord for bringing this important subject into discussion: he conceived, however, that their lordships had ample materials already on their table, and therefore would negative the appointment of a committee. It had been his object to give a true statement of the actual revenue and permanent charge, prepared, and verified, by officers of acknowledged accuracy and integrity. He would now briefly recapitulate the results, which were not matters of debate and dispute, as they rested on the evidence of facts. With these views he would confine himself to the abstract of the public income and permanent charge for the year ending the 5th April, 1803. The first article in that abstract shews, that the nett produce of the permanent taxes for the year had been 29,357,575*l.* The whole of that sum had been received in the exchequer, except about 470,000*l.* which had been paid in bounties on corn and rice, and which might clearly be considered as revenue. 2. The next sum, 165,763*l.* was an increase within the year, of balances in the hands of the receivers. 3. Beer duties postponed on the 5th April 1803, in consequence of the credit given by law to the brewers, 245,871*l.* 4. Land-tax unredeemed and annual malt, 2,000,000*l.* to which must be added 125,611*l.* paid *in transitu* by the county receivers, for the militia and other purposes, making together 2,125,611*l.* 5. Arrears outstanding on the beer and malt duties imposed in 1802, 557,493*l.* 6. The amount of the new additional assessed taxes, 835,646*l.* 7. The further produce of the new duties imposed in 1802, of which three quarters only are yet received. The accounts on the table state the fourth quarter at 1,052,116*l.* These several sums form a total of 34,340,069*l.* Add annual profit of the lottery, 370,000*l.* making altogether an income of 34,710,000*l.*

He would next proceed to state the permanent charge on the revenue. 1. Permanent charge on the unredeemed debt 17,674,794*l.* 2. Actual amount of the sinking fund 5,806,121*l.* 3. Civil list and parliamentary annuities 1,151,016*l.* making 24,631,931*l.* Deducting the permanent charge, 24,631,000*l.* from the total income 34,710,000*l.* the balance, being 10,069,000*l.* will be the sum applicable to the annual expense of the army, navy, ordnance, and miscellaneous services. And we have this large sum exclusive of what is paid for the civil list, and of the 5,800,000*l.* applying itself to the daily reduction of the debt; by the excellent operation of which system the debt is gradually converting itself into revenue.

Digitized by Google

He had thought it of the highest importance to give to his countrymen, in the present crisis, a well-founded confidence in their own resources and powers. He would next show, that the great increase of our revenue had gone hand in hand with the augmented prosperity of our trade and manufactures; he might add with our agriculture and population, and with every circumstance that constitutes national strength. It would be found by the papers before the House, that in the 20 years from 1784 to 1803, the annual produce of the old permanent taxes has increased from eleven to sixteen millions. And with respect to the commerce, that the total annual value of British imports and exports, taken on the same scale of valuation, is nearly doubled since 1793, and trebled since 1783. The total real value of British produce and manufactures exported in 1802 had been 48,500,000*l*. The revenue applicable in 1792 to the army, navy, ordnance, and miscellaneous services, was 4,700,000*l*. In the present year it is 10,069,000*l*. He was again aware that he should be told, that great as this revenue may be, it is three or four millions below the expenditure of the year. If it were meant by that insinuation, that the budget of the year ought to have brought forwards additional taxes to that amount, he could say, that such a proposition, if it had been made by the chancellor of the exchequer in November last, would have been treated with disregard and derision. He was as desirous as any man to avoid the creation of new debt, and to resist any system that may counteract the gradual discharge of the old. But surely we cannot be considered as having attained a peace establishment. From the treaty of Amiens to the present hour, the person who directs the counsels of France had done every thing to destroy the blessings of peace of which he talks so much. He had uniformly acted as if his government cannot subsist and be maintained, except in a state of agitation and convulsion. We have borne this treatment till the cup of provocation is filled to the very brim. Such a state of things must now resolve itself into settled peace or open war. Under this conviction, solicitous as he had been to show the greatness of our revenue, and the soundness of our resources, he was well aware that other essentials were wanted. If we should ever cease to be a powerful nation, we should soon find ourselves a subjugated people. With a disposition to preserve peace, as long as it can be preserved with honour, we must have the determination, to resist every attempt to violate our independence, or to injure our essential interests. He concluded by saying that he should negative the motion.

The Earl of *Moira* asserted, that even from the noble lord's statement, it appeared, that there was a considerable deficit; for it only allowed an excess of nine millions, to meet an expenditure of thirteen. He thought it was most preposterous, to enter into a comparison of the revenues of the country now, with what they were in 1784; every body knew they had much increased, but he, for one, did not consider that increase as a subject of much exultation. We knew the numerous additional taxes, which had been the fruitful sources of this increase; it was, indeed, consolatory to find, that the wonderful and unceasing skill and industry of the people of this great country pushes forward its commerce in spite of all its burthens. He never heard those very florid descriptions of our financial prosperity, without considering them as the forerunners of fresh expences and calamities. He did not wish false statements to be made, but he had a high opinion of the real strength and resources of this country, if it should become absolutely necessary to exert them to the utmost, against our ambitious and implacable enemy.

Lord *Grenville* said:—My lords; we are all much indebted to the noble lord who has so ably brought forward the present investigation. But had no member of this House challenged a discussion on the important subject, I should have thought it incumbent upon me to submit to your lordships a motion of a similar tendency. I cannot help recollecting the happy impression which the minister's speech made on the country at large, when he and his friends, previously to the Christmas recess, boasted so loudly of the great increase of the revenue, and of the wonderful surplus. Neither parliament nor the people, however, were aware, that, instead of a surplus, there was an alarming deficit; that ministers had not only forgotten to provide sufficiently for the expenditure, but that they appeared to have shut their eyes against the conviction of truth. In support of the observations which I am about to submit

Digitized by Google

to your lordships, I shall have little more to do than to refer to the official papers of the chancellor of the exchequer, sanctioned by the noble lord (Auckland), and published to the world by their authority. Ministers have very unfortunately acted upon these fallacious *data*, and thence endangered the nation, and disgraced themselves. In the remarks which I am about to make, I wish by no means to damp the spirits, or cramp the energy of the country. Men may differ on matters of finance as well as on other topics of a public nature, without intending the smallest injury to their dearest rights and liberties. In calling the attention of the House to the detection of false statements, I wish to look our real situation fully in the face—I wish not to shrink from every mode of investigation which can lead us to truth. This country, thank God! has no cause for despondency. If, unfortunately, our ministers should involve us in the calamities of war, we have ample resources to enable us to protect our freedom and independence. We have a revenue fully adequate to any public emergency; but then it is requisite, that that revenue should be under the management of men capable of discharging their duty to the public—men worthy of the confidence reposed in them by a great, a powerful, and a liberal nation—not of men, who, by a defect in judgment, and by an absence of talents, have not only involved themselves, but the country, in alarming disasters and disgrace. Such might be said to be the true picture of their financial results. Every man of political skill and experience could not help expressing much surprise at the extraordinary mode adopted before the Christmas recess, to announce to the nation the flourishing state of the revenue. This mode may be commendable on some occasions. A case may arise, when a deviation from the common practice in parliament may perhaps be requisite; but I cannot conceive that such a case rendered such a deviation an indispensable act at the time alluded to. If, however, it was necessary to congratulate parliament and the country on such a joyful occasion, the statement on which ministers raised the superstructure of our happiness ought to have been supported by truth. The contrary, however, was unfortunately the real view of the subject. The financial statement on which ministers so much depended for a vindication of their conduct would not bear investigation. It was fallacious in the extreme. It certainly operated most powerfully and fatally on the monied men as well as on parliament. It has served to delude, and may serve to ruin many worthy but credulous members of society, unles speedily checked, by an exposure of its pernicious tendency. In the imaginary budget of the year, we heard of the supposed expedient of a loan. Is this the last loan that will be deemed expedient to answer the exigency of government? If the minister could, instead of a deficit of millions, produce the regular surplus of a million a year, there would, perhaps, be little or no occasion for a loan. It was certainly a very pleasing communication to hear of a million surplus, applicable to the services of the state; but the more pleasing the communication of such news, the more mortifying when it was proved a delusion. On the very first appearance of this official statement, its internal as well as external evidence proved that it was void of foundation; and, notwithstanding the adventurous spirit of the noble lord (Auckland), who had vindicated the remarkable document, seldom or never did any statement of so short an existence turn out to be so totally erroneous. This statement, instead of exhibiting a surplus of one million, exhibited a gross deficit of upward of three millions; and the total difference between the supposed and actual state of our finances, according to the official documents, amounted to no less than 5,313,000*l.* The only sure mode of avoiding the recurrence of peace loans is by equalizing our actual income with our actual expenditure, and reserving it to parliament to judge hereafter whether any increase in our comparative income shall be applied in diminution of taxes or in accelerated reduction of debt. As to the expected contribution from India, if it depended upon the noble marquis's exertion now at the head of our government in that quarter of the world, I should entertain no doubt of seeing it fully realized. There are, however, two facts on which this expected contribution very much depends: the maintenance of peace in India, and also in Europe. After the due consideration of the facts, with what justice could ministers hold out so fallacious a statement to the public? I ask, what monied man, what merchant, who relied on the statement made by the ministers before the

Digitized by Google

Christmas recess, would extend his confidence to the authors of that statement? Where is the much boasted surplus? Where is the proof of the flourishing state of our revenue? If the surplus does not exist—and it is evident that it does not—it is the duty of ministers to adopt some measure to operate its production—it is their duty to render the income equal to the expenditure. If we are to enter into a new war, let our resources be under proper management—let us fight for our rights and liberties, if reduced to the lamentable necessity, with all our national spirit, and all our energy. A noble lord had treated with indifference the maxim, that our income and expenditure ought at least to be equalized. Good God! am I not speaking in a country which has felt the truth of this principle? In a country, whose commercial existence depends upon its probity and honour? Then why deny the validity of such a maxim? But it is of a piece with the conduct of the men who have acted such a variety of characters under the same mask—who have advanced and receded—who have turned and returned—who have avowed and disavowed in the very same breath. But, say they—"We calculated upon certain greater reductions in the army!" Reductions in the army! I know of no other mode of effecting a reduction of the army than that adopted by our ministers for the reduction of the navy. As they have ingeniously discovered, that ships of war may be put to sea against the enemy without men, so they may, perhaps, also discover, that generals may draw up an army in battle array without soldiers! Thus, to equalise their expenditure to their income, they may easily reduce both army and navy to the skeletons of what they hitherto have been! I am not actuated on this occasion by personal animosity. I speak of them as ministers. Were I called upon to declare what part of their public conduct was the most exceptionable, I would put my finger upon their gross mismanagement of the public revenue. I wish to call to the recollection of the House the following leading facts of the minister's finance administration:—first, his having given notice, within a very short time after his coming into office, of a repeal, or a very considerable modification of the salt duties, amounting to near a million annually, for which he proposed no tax in substitution. Thus taking a fallacious credit for the relief which such a measure, if it had been practicable, might have afforded to some parts of the country, without adverting to the additional burthens which must have been laid on some other article, in order to replace that revenue—a pledge which seems to have been held out at the time only to gain a little momentary popularity. 2ndly, That when he came into office, he found a system established of raising a part of the supplies within the year, and this in a time of a most burthensome war. That this system, which he ought to have continued, at least to the extent of discharging in that mode a considerable portion of the remaining war expenses, he has totally abandoned, and, for the discharge of those expenses, has had recourse wholly to peace loans; and that even in the present year the amount of the money to be thus borrowed in time of peace will entirely suspend the effect of the sinking fund, by increasing the public debt on one hand faster than it can be paid off on the other; whereas it would have been the obvious policy of any wise government to have adopted such a system in peace as should have accelerated instead of retarding the reduction of the public debt, the large amount of which will be the principal difficulty with which we shall have to contend in war. 3rdly, That having for these purposes persevered in the injurious practice of peace loans, to the full extent of the whole excess of our expenditure beyond our permanent income, he has not even fairly met the indispensable duty of providing duly for the interest and gradual redemption of these loans; he is, on the contrary, the first minister who has ever introduced into our finances the dangerous principle of anticipating future resources by raising loans on a deferred interest: That this has, indeed, in this first instance, been done to no very large extent; but that the introduction of the principle is not the less to be condemned. 4thly, That besides this, he has acted in open breach of the wise system established by parliament, by which every future loan was to be accompanied by a sinking fund, in the proportion of one per cent of the capital borrowed. That he has carried his violation of this fundamental rule to so great an extent, that he made his whole loan last year, to the amount of 30 millions, without any such provision. This was done under the pretence of a consolidation of the two existing sinking funds,

Digitized by Google

by which it was said that the whole debt would ultimately be paid off in a shorter period than before. It was true, that such an arrangement might have been proper and profitable, if, in addition to the funds to provide for the interest of the loan, other taxes to the amount required by the act of 1792, had been last year imposed, and their amount duly carried to the diminution of debt, though not to the redemption of that particular loan; or if, in any other mode, provision had, at the same time, been made for paying off within the year, such a proportionable amount of debt, as would have been equal in its effect to the annual amount thus withheld from the present operation of the sinking fund. But that the measure, unaccompanied by any such provision, operated only to relieve the present finance minister at the expense of his successors, and was, so far as it went, a direct breach of faith with the public creditors of the present day; because, although it be ultimately true, that the whole debt may be sooner paid off, yet a smaller portion would have been paid off at the particular periods within the interval, and particularly within the next ten years, when it is reasonably to be supposed the pressure of the public debt, and its consequent depreciation, are likely to be at the highest. 5thly, That having thus departed from the system of raising a part of the extraordinary expenses within the year—having made peace loans for that purpose, to the total suspension of the sinking fund even in time of peace—and having omitted to make a due and full provision either for the interest, or for the redemption of those loans—the minister has now brought forward a statement calculated to persuade the country, that, without any additional sacrifices or burthens whatever, our permanent means may be expected to exceed our permanent expenditure; whereas the truth appears to be, that to meet even the reduced expenditure which he supposes, two millions in addition to the present revenue must be raised every year, either by peace loans, or by fresh taxes, unless that necessity should hereafter be superseded by any increase of the actual revenue—a supposition on which no government can safely rely for meeting actual deficiencies;—and that thus to meet an expenditure equal to that which he himself proposed to parliament last November, this sum of two millions must, in some of these modes, be increased to four millions. On these grounds, I shall give my support to the present motion.

The Earl of *Westmoreland* defended the statement of the minister, and thought it unfair to expect an exact balance of revenue and expenditure in the first year after a war. If peace should continue, he had no doubt, but that the estimates would be found correct.

Lord *Pelham* defended the ministerial statement of the finances, but considered this as a question which, according to established usage, ought rather to be discussed in the other House of legislature.

The Bishop of *St. Asaph* thought this was no time for invidious and warm discussion of such a nature. Parliament ought rather now to show itself perfectly united against the foreign foe.

The question was then put and negatived.

The King's Message relative to the Termination of the Discussions with France.] May 16. The Chancellor of the Exchequer presented the following Message from his Majesty:

"G. *R.*

"His majesty thinks it proper to acquaint the House of Commons, that the discussions which he announced to them, in his Message of the 8th of March last, as then subsisting between his majesty and the French government, have been terminated; that the conduct of the French government has obliged his majesty to recall his ambassador from Paris, and that the ambassador from the French republic has left London.

"His majesty has given directions for laying before the House of Commons, with as little delay as possible, copies of such Papers as will afford the fullest information to his parliament at this important conjuncture.

"It is a consolation to his majesty to reflect, that no endeavours have been wanting on his part to preserve to his subjects the blessings of peace; but under the circumstances which have occurred to disappoint his just expectations, his majesty relies with confidence on the zeal and public spirit of his faithful Commons, and on the exertions of his brave and loyal subjects to support him in his determination to employ the power and resources of the nation, in opposing the spirit of ambition and encroachment which at present actuates the councils of France,

Digitized by Google

in upholding the dignity of his crown, and in asserting and maintaining the rights and interests of his people. G. R."

On the motion of lord Hawkesbury, the Message was ordered to be taken into consideration on the 23rd. A similar Message was presented to the Lords, by lord Pelham.

PAPERS RELATIVE TO THE DISCUSSIONS WITH FRANCE.] May 18. The following Papers were laid before both Houses, by command of his Majesty:

PAPERS RESPECTING THE DISCUSSIONS WITH FRANCE.

No. 1.—Letter from M. Otto to lord Hawkesbury, dated London, May 23rd, 1802.

My Lord;—The 10th article of the treaty of Amiens, which fixes the new organization of the order of Malta, having prescribed various measures, to the execution of which it is necessary that the two principal contracting powers should concur, the First Consul has named general Vial as minister plenipotentiary to the order and Island of Malta, for the purpose of concerting with the person whom his Britannic majesty shall appoint for that purpose, respecting the execution of the arrangements agreed upon in the late treaty. General Vial will set out on his destination as soon as your excellency shall have informed me of his majesty's intentions, and of the choice he may make. I have, &c.

OTTO.

No. 2.—Letter from Lord Hawkesbury, to M. Otto, dated, Downing-street, May 24th, 1802.

Sir;—In answer to your letter of yesterday, in which you communicate to me the nomination, by the first consul, of general Vial to be minister plenipotentiary of the French republic, to the order of Saint John of Jerusalem; I have the honour to inform you, that the king has been pleased to appoint sir Alexander Ball to be his majesty's minister to the order. Sir A. Ball will shortly proceed to Malta, and will be instructed to concert with general Vial the necessary measures for carrying into effect the arrangements relative to that island, which are stipulated in the 10th article of the definitive treaty of peace. I have, &c. HAWKESBURY.

No. 3.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord St. Helens to Lord Hawkesbury, dated St. Petersburgh, April 23rd, 1802.

I hope very soon to be enabled to re-dispatch your lordship's last messenger with the answer of this government to the communications which I have made to them, in obedience to his majesty's commands, respecting the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens. In the mean time I must not conceal from your lordship, that there is great reason to fear that his Imperial majesty will decline taking part in the proposed joint guaranty of the possessions and new constitution of the order of Malta.

No. 4.—Extract of a dispatch from Lord St. Helens to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Petersburgh, May 7th, 1802.

I have reason to hope that the first impressions that had been produced here by certain parts of the arrangement relative to Malta, have been removed; and that his Imperial majesty may even be ultimately induced to guaranty the whole of that arrangement; provided that the steps which have been taken towards the election of a new grand master, according to the mode suggested by this court, be considered as fulfilling what is required on that head by the latter part of the paragraph of the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens; and consequently that no new election for that office is to take place in the manner pointed out by the former part of the same stipulation.

No. 5.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Mr. Merry, dated Downing-street, June 5th, 1802.

Sir;—I informed you in my dispatch No. 10, that M. Otto had made an official communication to me, that general Vial was appointed by the first consul minister plenipotentiary to the order of St. John of Jerusalem. Sir Alexander Ball has been in consequence invested with the same character by his majesty. He will proceed immediately to Malta, and he will receive instructions to concert with general Vial the best means of carrying into complete effect the stipulations contained in the 10th article of the definitive treaty. By the paragraph marked No. 1, in that article, it is stipulated:

"The knights of the order, whose langues shall continue to subsist after the exchange of the ratifications of the present treaty, are invited to return to Malta as soon as that exchange shall have taken place: they shall there form a general chapter, and shall proceed to the election of a grand master, to be chosen from amongst the natives of those nations which preserve langues, if no such election shall have been already made since the exchange of the ratifications of the preliminary articles of peace."

The object of this paragraph was, that in the event of an election having taken place subsequent to the exchange of the ratifications of the preliminary articles of peace, and antecedent to the conclusion of the definitive treaty, that election should be considered as valid; and though no mention is made in the article of the proclamation of the emperor of Russia soon after his accession to the throne, by which the knights of the order were invited to assemble, and to proceed to the election of a grand master, the stipulation in

Digitized by Google

question evidently referred to the contingency of an election taking place on the continent in consequence of that proclamation.

You will inform the French government, that his majesty is ready to consider the election which has lately taken place at St. Petersburgh, under the auspices of the emperor of Russia, to be valid, according to the stipulation in the 10th article.

His majesty has no other object in the whole of this transaction, than that the 10th article of the treaty may be fairly executed; and that the arrangement may be carried into complete execution with as little difficulty as possible.

As the 13th paragraph in the 10th article stipulates that the governments of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, should be invited to accede to the arrangements respecting Malta, it is desirable that the French government should instruct, without delay, their ambassadors or ministers at Vienna, Petersburgh, and Berlin, to make, conjointly with his majesty's ministers at those courts, an official communication, desiring the accession of those powers to the arrangements relative to Malta in the definitive treaty; by which it is provided, that the independence of the island and the other stipulations shall be under the guarantee of those powers, in conjunction with his majesty, the French government, and the king of Spain. I have, &c.

HAWKESBURY.

No. 6.—Extract of a dispatch from Anthony Merry, Esq. to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, June 17th, 1802.

I have now the honour to transmit to your lordship, inclosed, copy of an answer which reached me last night (though dated eight days back), from the French minister, to the note verbale which I delivered to him, containing his majesty's propositions respecting the execution of some points of the arrangements relative to Malta, contained in the 10th article of the definitive treaty of peace. You will find the entire acquiescence of this government to those propositions, expressed in a very satisfactory manner.

[Inclosure referred to in No. 6.]

His Britannic majesty's minister plenipotentiary has the honour to transmit herewith to citizen Talleyrand, minister for the foreign affairs of the French republic, the "note verbale" of the communication he has been ordered to make to him by his government, who are desirous that the proposals it contains may be acceptable to the French government; and they may be assured the British government in making these proposals, have no other object in view than to facilitate, in the easiest manner, the execution of the treaty of Amiens, and to act in this respect in perfect harmony with the French government. Mr. Merry has the honour, &c.

(Signed) ANT. MERRY.

Paris 8th June, 1802.

The citizen minister for foreign affairs will find inclosed a list of suffrages obtained from several priories of the order of St. John of Jerusalem, for the election of a grand master, which has been received from St. Petersburgh by the British government, with the notice that these priories have agreed amongst themselves, that his holiness the pope shall select (*pro hac vice*), from amongst the candidates therein specified, the person who is to fill the post of grand master. His Britannic majesty on his part is willing to consider an election so made as valid, according to the stipulations of the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens. His majesty therefore is ready to acknowledge, in quality of grand master, the person whom the pope shall think proper to fix upon, from amongst the names contained in that list. His majesty has no other end in view in this, than to see the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens duly fulfilled, and the arrangement it contains executed with as little difficulty as possible. It is stipulated by the 13th paragraph of the same article, that the Austrian, Russian, and Prussian governments, shall be solicited to accede to the said arrangement. The British government is of opinion that it might be proper for that of France to send without delay instructions to their ministers at Vienna, Petersburgh, and Berlin, to make conjointly with his Britannic majesty's ministers a communication to those powers in which they should be invited to accede to the arrangement respecting Malta, by which the independence of the island, and the other stipulations relative thereto, are placed under the protection and guarantee of those powers conjointly with their Britannic and Catholic majesties, and the French republic.

The undersigned, minister for foreign affairs, has the honour to transmit to M. Merry, his Britannic Majesty's minister plenipotentiary, his answer to the note verbale which he addressed to him on the eighth Prairial. He doubts not that his majesty's ministers will see in this answer a new proof of the constant dispositions of the first consul to come to an agreement with the English government, for the securing and facilitating the execution of the respective clauses of the treaty which has re-established peace between the two states. The undersigned has the honour, &c.

(Signed) CHA. MAU. TALLEYRAND.—Paris, 20th Prairial, year 10.

[The minister for foreign affairs of the French republic has received the communication which has been made to him by his Britannic majesty's minister plenipotentiary, of the list of the candidates nominated by the votes of the different priories to the grand mastership of the order of Malta; and he has submitted to the first consul the proposal concerted between the priories of the order, and approved by his Britannic majesty, of submitting (*pro hac vice*) to his holiness the choice among the proposed candidates.

Digitized by Google

The first consul has no other object in whatever relates to the order of Malta, than to see the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens duly executed, and to remove all the obstacles which might render that execution tardy or difficult. He moreover desires equally with his Britannic majesty, that France and England should act in concert, in order the better to secure the independence and the organisation of the order of Malta. He therefore consents that the choice of its grand master, from the canditates proposed by the votes of the priories, should for this time be submitted to his holiness.

As to the 13th paragraph of the same article, respecting the accession of the powers, the first consul thinks with his Britannic majesty, that the powers should be invited to give their consent to the arrangements agreed upon; and the French ministers at the courts of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, shall consequently receive orders to take, conjointly with his Britannic majesty's ministers, the necessary steps for obtaining the accession provided by the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens.]—Paris, 10th Prairial, year 10.

No. 7.—Dispatch from Mr. Merry to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, June 4, 1802.

My Lord;—I had occasion to see Mr. Talleyrand yesterday afternoon, for the purpose of introducing to him, by appointment, some English gentlemen, previously to their presentation to-day to the first consul.

Having gone first alone into the minister's cabinet, he said, that he had been directed by general Buonaparté, to represent to me several circumstances which stood very much in the way of that perfect reconciliation and good understanding between the two countries and their governments, which it was the first consul's sincere wish to see re-established, in order that such obstacles might be removed before the arrival in London of the French ambassador, because, although the circumstances in question had already produced a very disagreeable effect, whilst only M. Otto, as minister, had to witness them, they would acquire a great addition of force if they should still exist when the ambassador should be present; and since the first consul had given orders for general Andreossy to proceed to his destination with as little delay as possible, he wished that I should take an early opportunity to give an account to your lordship of the observations which he was charged to make to me.

After a preface to this effect, M. Talleyrand proceeded to state to me, that the accounts which M. Otto had transmitted of the disgust and inconvenience which he could not but feel and experience at meeting, frequently, at his majesty's court, and at other places, the French princes, and some French persons still decorated with the insignia of French orders which no longer existed; and, at seeing the countenance and support which continued to be given, in England, to what, he termed, the ci-devant French bishops, as well as to other persons (he here mentioned Georges) inimical to the present government of France, had affected, so strongly, the first consul, and were, in fact, so calculated to prevent that system of cordiality, which he was anxious to see established, that it was incumbent upon him to express his wish, that his majesty's government might be disposed to remove out of the British dominions all the French princes and their adherents, together with the French bishops, and other French individuals, whose political principles and conduct must necessarily occasion great jealousy to the French government. He continued to observe, that the protection and favour which all the persons in question continued to meet with in a country so close a neighbour to France, must alone be always considered as an encouragement to the disaffected here, even without those persons themselves being guilty of any acts tending to foment fresh disturbances in his country; but that the government here possessed proofs of the abuse which they were now making of the protection which they enjoyed in England, and of the advantage they were taking of the vicinity of their situation to France, by being really guilty of such acts, since several printed papers had lately been intercepted, which it was known they had sent, and caused to be circulated in France, and which had for their object, to create an opposition to the government. I cannot, my lord, do better than refer you to what you will have read in the French official paper of the day before yesterday (under the article of Paris), for the exact text of M. Talleyrand's discourse upon this subject; which he concluded by saying, that he thought the residence of Louis 18th was now the proper place for that of the rest of the family, and that I might add this suggestion in my report to your lordship.

I answered the French minister, that, without any reference to you, I could assure him, that the practices of the French residing in England, of which he complained, had not been encouraged, nor would be countenanced by his majesty's government; which was as sincerely disposed to cultivate harmony and good understanding between the two countries, as he had represented the first consul to be; but that I could by no means say how far they would be disposed to adopt the measure which he had intimated it to be general Buonaparté's wish that they should pursue, in order to remove, so effectually, every thing which might not, perhaps, be considered equally by them as giving just cause of offence or jealousy to France.

M. Talleyrand did not rejoin upon the matter, but asked me when I proposed writing. Upon my replying I should lose no time, he said, that if I should write as to-day, he would avail himself of the opportunity to convey a letter to M. Otto. I have the honour to be, &c. A MERRY.

Digitized by Google

No. 8.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Mr. Merry, dated June 10, 1802.

Sir;—Your dispatches of the 4th instant were received on Monday night, and have been laid before the king. The account given in that dispatch of the conversation which passed on the 3rd instant, between you and M. Talleyrand, respecting the French princes and their adherents, would have afforded here considerable surprise, if his majesty's government had not in some degree been prepared for it by information which had been previously received; from the manner, however, in which this subject has been mentioned to you, it is important that you should take a proper opportunity to explain, candidly and fairly, to the French government, the line of conduct which his majesty feels it to be his duty to pursue in this very delicate business. His majesty would certainly consider it inconsistent with both the letter and spirit of the treaty of peace, between him and the French republic, to encourage or countenance any projects that might be hostile to the present government of France. He is sincerely desirous, that the peace which has been concluded, may be permanent, and may lead to the establishment of a system of good understanding and harmony between the two countries. With these sentiments, he is disposed to employ all the means in his power to guard against any circumstance which can have the effect of disturbing the tranquillity that has been so happily restored; and he certainly expects, that all foreigners who may reside within his dominions, should not only hold a conduct conformable to the laws of the country, but should abstain from all acts which may be hostile to the government of any country with which his majesty may be at peace. As long, however, as they conduct themselves according to these principles, his majesty would feel it inconsistent with his dignity, with his honour, and with the common laws of hospitality, to deprive them of that protection which individuals, resident in his dominions, can only forfeit by their own misconduct. The greater part of the persons to whom allusion has been made in M. Talleyrand's conversation with you, are living in retirement; and his majesty has no reason whatever to suppose, that since the conclusion of peace, they have availed themselves of their residence in this country, to promote any designs injurious to the government of France. I have, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 9.—Dispatch from Mr. Merry to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, June 17, 1802.

My Lord;—I have the honour to acquaint your lordship, that I have executed the instructions given me by your secret and confidential dispatch, (No. 14), in consequence of the communication from M. Talleyrand, which I transmitted in my number 23, respecting the residence of the French princes, and other French persons in his majesty's dominions.

In delivering my answer on this business to the French minister, I took care to express, in the strongest manner, the assurances which your lordship has authorised me to give of his majesty's sincere desire, that the peace which has happily been concluded should be permanent, and that it should lead to the establishment of a system of harmony and good understanding between the two countries; and that, as his majesty's conduct would, in every respect, be guided by those sentiments, he, of course, would not tolerate, much less encourage, any proceedings on the part of persons within his dominions, which might be hostile to the present government of France; which assurances might, I trusted, be sufficient to tranquillize and satisfy the first consul, without recurring to the measures which had been intimated to me, and which could not but be considered as inconsistent with his majesty's dignity and honour, as well as with the common laws of hospitality, which he could not but observe towards foreigners within his dominions, until they should have forfeited that protection by their misconduct.

M. Talleyrand expressed to me, in reply, that the first consul had solicited no more than the British government itself had, at the time, demanded of France, when the Pretender was in this country, and than had been practised between other governments, under similar circumstances; that he could not see any humiliation in the measure which he had intimated to me; that he could assure me it had not been suggested with any such idea; and that he could only repeat, that the adoption of it would be, in the highest degree, agreeable and satisfactory to the first consul, and be considered by him as the most convincing proof of his majesty's disposition to see a cordial good understanding established between the two countries; concluding his answer with a request that I would report it to your lordship.

I rejoined upon the subject, by observing to the French minister, that even without adverting to the serious consideration of the king's dignity and honour, the feelings of the people of England were to be taken into account on the occasion; that he must be sensible the relative situation hitherto of the two countries, especially in regard to trade, afforded his majesty's subjects no room to reap those advantages which were common to, and which were always expected from a state of peace; and that it therefore appeared to me that the first consul would equally give a proof of his disposition to see harmony, and a friendly intercourse, re-established between the two nations, by not repeating his wish upon a matter which would operate in the strongest manner against such an approximation and reconciliation of sentiments, were it

Digitized by Google

even only to come to the knowledge of his majesty's subjects.

I am happy, my lord, to say, that M. Talleyrand showed no warmth, or any very marked eagerness, in his manner of replying to my communication; and that our conversation on this head terminated with the last remarks I made to him, when he changed it to another subject. I have, &c.

(Signed) ANTH. MERRY.

No. 10.—Letter from M. Otto to Lord Hawkesbury, dated July 25, 1802.

My Lord;—I transmitted some time ago, to Mr. Hammond, a number of Peltier, containing the most gross calumnies against the French government, and against the whole nation; and I observed that I should probably receive an order to demand the punishment of such an abuse of the press. That order is actually arrived, and I cannot conceal from you, my lord, that the reiterated insults of a small number of foreigners, assembled in London, to conspire against the French government, produce the most unfavourable effects on the good understanding between the two nations. Even though the first article of the treaty of Amiens had not provided for the maintenance of that respect which two independent nations owe to each other, the general maxims of the law of nations would formally condemn so revolting an abuse of the liberty of the press. It cannot be believed, that the law can give more latitude to a libellist than to any other individual, who, without declaration of war, should permit himself to violate the duties of good neighbourhood. The offence in question is so much the more serious, as its object is evidently to disturb the harmony which subsists between the two governments.

It is not to Peltier alone, but to the editor of the "Courier François de Londres," to Cobbett, and to other writers who resemble them, that I have to direct the attention of his majesty's government. The perfidious and malevolent publications of these men are in open contradiction to the principles of peace; and if it could ever enter into the mind of the French government to permit retaliation, writers would, doubtless, be found in France, willing to avenge their countrymen, by filling their pages with odious reflexions on the most respectable persons, and on the dearest institutions of Great Britain.

The want of positive laws against these sorts of offences cannot palliate the violation of the law of nations, according to which, peace should put a stop to all hostilities; and doubtless, those which wound the honour and the reputation of a government, and which tend to cause a revolt of the people, whose interests are confided to that government, are the most apt to lessen the advantages of peace, and to keep up national resentments. I have, &c.

(Signed) OTTO.

No. 11.—Letter from Lord Hawkesbury to M. Otto, dated July 28, 1802.

Sir;— I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter on the subject of the last number of Peltier. It is impossible that his majesty's government could peruse the article in question, without the greatest displeasure, and without an anxious desire that the person who published it should suffer the punishment he so justly deserves. The calumnies, however, to which his majesty's government, and many of the best subjects in this country are frequently exposed in the public prints, must necessarily convince all foreign governments of the difficulties which exist in a constitution like that of Great Britain, in preventing the abuse which is often unavoidably attendant on the greatest of all political benefits; and though publications of this nature are, as they certainly ought to be, by the law of England, subject to punishment, it is often difficult to prove the guilt of an individual so satisfactorily as to obtain the judgment of a court of justice; and the inconvenience which arises from prosecution, unless there is a reasonable prospect of success, is frequently sufficient to deter both the government and individuals from undertaking it. In the present case, I have thought it my duty to refer the article in question to his majesty's attorney-general, for his opinion whether it is or is not a libel, according to the construction of the law of England, and whether it is such a libel as he would, under all the circumstances, recommend for prosecution. As soon as I receive his report, I shall have the honour of communicating it to you. I have, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 12.—Note from M. Otto to Lord Hawkesbury, dated August 17, 1802.

The undersigned minister plenipotentiary of the French republic, having submitted to his government the letter which his excellency lord Hawkesbury, minister and principal secretary of state of his Britannic majesty, did him the honour of writing, under date of 27th July, is directed to offer the following observations:

If the British government tolerates censures upon the acts of its administration, and the personal abuse of the most respectable men, it does not suffer even the slightest attempt against the public tranquillity, the fundamental laws of the empire, and supreme authority which arises from them. Every nation is, moreover, at liberty to sacrifice any advantage whatever in its interior, in order to obtain another to which it attaches a higher value; but the government which does not repress the licentiousness of the press, when it may be injurious to the honour or the interests of foreign powers, would afford an opportunity to libellists to endanger the public tranquillity, or at least, the good understanding that forms

Digitized by Google

the basis of it: and whenever such serious injuries are continued in a regular and systematic manner, doubts must arise as to its own dispositions.

The particular laws and constitution of Great Britain are subordinate to the general principles of the law of nations, which supersede the laws of each individual state. If it be a right in England to allow the most extensive liberty to the press, it is a public right of polished nations, and the bounden duty of governments, to prevent, repress, and punish, every attack which might, by those means, be made against the rights, the interests, and the honour of foreign powers.

This general maxim of the law of nations has never been mistaken without paving the way for the greatest divisions, and has even furnished in England, a plausible pretext to those who have written volumes to prove the necessity of the last war against France. Are these men now desirous of presenting to the consular government, a weapon which they have wielded with so much address? and can they flatter themselves that the authority which has signed the peace has not power to maintain it.

By the first article of the treaty of Amiens, the two powers agree to afford no protection, either directly or indirectly, to those who should cause prejudice to any of them.

But the greatest of all injuries, doubtless, is that which tends to debase a foreign government, or to excite, within its territory, civil and religious commotions: and the most decided of all protections, is that, which places under the safeguard of the laws, men who seek not only to disturb the political tranquillity of Europe, but even to dissolve the first bonds of society.

The undersigned minister must moreover observe, that this is not a question respecting some paragraphs, which, through the inadvertence of an editor, might have been accidentally inserted in a public print; but it is a question of a deep and continued system of defamation, directed not only against the chief of the French republic, but against all the constituted authorities of the republic; against the whole nation; represented by these libellers in the most odious and degrading terms. It has even been remarked, that many of these prints contain an appeal to the French people, against the government and fundamental laws of their country.

If these observations apply to the English writers, who, for these three months past, have deluged the public with the most perfidious and unbecoming publications, they are still more applicable to a class of foreign calumniators, who appear to avail themselves of the asylum offered them in England, only for the purpose of the better gratifying their hatred against France, and undermining the foundations of peace.

It is not merely by insulting and seditious writings, evidently published with a view to circulation in France, but by other incendiary papers distributed through the maritime departments, in order to excite the evil-disposed or weak inhabitants to resist the execution of the *concordate*, that these implacable enemies of France continue to exercise hostilities, and to provoke the just indignation of the French government and people. Not a doubt exists of these writings having been composed and circulated by Georges, and by the former bishops of France. These men can no longer be considered but as rebels against both political and religious authority; and after their reiterated attempts to disturb the good understanding between the two governments, their residence in England militates openly against the spirit and letter of the treaty of peace.

The meetings, likewise, which have taken place in the island of Jersey, and the odious plots which are there framed, in spite of the representations which the undersigned minister has already taken care to make on this subject, also demand immediate measures to be taken by a government, the neighbour and friend of France.

Other persons (attached, by recollections never to be effaced, and by regrets too long fostered, to an order of things which no longer exists in France) find themselves daily implicated by the plots of those who pretend to serve them. A sense of their own reputation will, without doubt, lead them to avoid a focus of intrigues, with which they ought not to have the least connexion.

Peace happily re-established, the mutual desire of the two countries to render it solid and lasting, and the general interests of humanity, require, that all these causes of dissatisfaction should be done away, and that his majesty's ministry should, by frank and energetic measures, manifest their disapprobation of all the attempts made to produce new divisions.

The undersigned has, in consequence, received especial order to solicit, 1st. That his majesty's government will adopt the most effectual measures to put a stop to the unbecoming and seditious publications with which the newspapers and writings printed in England are filled. 2nd. That the individuals mentioned in the undersigned minister's letter of the 23rd July last, shall be sent out of the island of Jersey. 3rd. That the former bishops of Arras and St. Pol de Leon, and all those who, like them, under the pretext of religion, seek to raise disturbances in the interior of France, shall likewise be sent away. 4th. That Georges and his adherents shall be transported to Canada, according to the intention which the undersigned has been directed to transmit to his government at the request of lord Hawkesbury. 5th. That, in order to deprive the evil-disposed of every pretext for disturbing the good understanding between the two governments, it shall be recommended to the princes of the house of Bourbon, at present in Great Britain, to repair

Digitized by Google

to Warsaw, the residence of the head of their family. 6th. That such of the French emigrants as still think proper to wear the orders and decorations belonging to the ancient government of France, shall be required to quit the territory of the British empire.

These demands are founded upon the treaty of Amiens, and upon the verbal assurances that the undersigned minister has had the satisfaction to receive, in the course of the negotiations, with regard to a mutual agreement for maintaining tranquillity and good order in the two countries. If any one in particular of these demands does not proceed so immediately from the treaty concluded, it would be easy to justify it by striking examples, and to prove how very attentive the British government has been, in times of internal fermentation, to remove from the territory of a neighbouring power, those who might endanger the public tranquillity.

Whatever may be the protection which the English laws afford to native writers, and to other subjects of his majesty, the French government knows that foreigners do not here enjoy the same protection; and that the law, known by the title of the Alien act, gives the ministry of his Britannic majesty an authority which it has often exercised against foreigners, whose residence was prejudicial to the interests of Great Britain. The first clause of this act states, expressly, that any order in council which requires a foreigner to quit the kingdom shall be executed, under pain of imprisonment and transportation. There exists, therefore, in the ministry, a legal and sufficient power to restrain foreigners, without having recourse to courts of law; and the French government, which offers, on this point, a perfect reciprocity, thinks it gives a new proof of its pacific intentions, by demanding that those persons may be sent away, whose machinations uniformly tend to sow discord between the two people. It owes to itself, and to the nation at large (which has made it the depository of its power and of its honour), not to appear insensible to insults and to plots during profound peace, which the irritation of open war could not justify, and it is too well acquainted with the conciliatory dispositions of the British ministry, not to rely upon its efforts to disperse a faction, equally the enemy of France and England. The undersigned, &c.

OTTO.

No. 13.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Mr. Merry, dated August 28, 1802.

Sir;—I send you the copy of a letter which I received some days ago from M. Otto, together with a copy of an official note enclosed in it. I have informed M. Otto, that you would receive instructions to enter into explanations with the French government on the several points to which it refers. It is impossible not to feel considerable surprise at the circumstances under which it has been thought proper to present such a note; at the style in which it is drawn up; and at the complaints contained in it. Whatever may be the general dispositions of the French government towards this country, supposing them to be as hostile as they have been at any former period, or even more so, it would appear so contrary to their interest to provoke a war with us at the present moment, that I am inclined to ascribe their conduct, in the whole of this business, more to temper, than to any other motive; but whether their conduct is to be referred to temper or to policy, the effects of it may still be the same; it is therefore become of the utmost importance that a frank explanation should be made of the line of conduct which his majesty has determined to adopt on reasons of the nature of those to which this note refers, and of the motives on which it is founded; and it is to be hoped that such an explanation will have the effect of putting an end to a course of proceeding, which can lead only to perpetual irritation between the two governments, and which might ultimately tend to the most serious consequences.

The first consideration that naturally arises on this transaction, is that of the peculiar circumstances under which the note of M. Otto has been presented. It cannot be denied that some very improper paragraphs have lately appeared in some of the English newspapers against the government of France; it cannot be denied, likewise, that publications of a still more improper and indecent nature have made their appearance in this country, with the names of foreigners affixed to them. Under these circumstances, the French government would have been warranted in expecting every redress that the laws of this country could afford them; but as, instead of seeking it in the ordinary course, they have thought fit to resort to recrimination themselves, or, at least, to authorize it in others, they could have no right to complain, if their subsequent appeal to his majesty had failed to produce the effect that otherwise would have attended it.

Whatever may have been the nature of the prior injury, they have, in fact, taken the law into their own hands; and what is this recrimination and retort? The paragraphs in the English newspapers, the publications to which I have above referred, have not appeared under any authority of the British government, and are disavowed and disapproved of by them; but the paragraph in the Moniteur has appeared in a paper avowedly official, for which the government are, therefore, considered as responsible, as his majesty's government is responsible for the contents of the London Gazette. And this retort is not confined to the unauthorized English newspapers, or to the other publications of which complaint is now made, but is converted into, and made a pretence for a direct attack upon the government of his majesty. His majesty feels

Digitized by Google

it beneath his dignity to make any formal complaint on this occasion; but it has been impossible for me to proceed to the other parts of the subject, without pointing your attention to the conduct of the French government in this respect, that you may observe upon it in the manner it deserves.

The propositions in M. Otto's official note, are six in number; but may, in fact, be divided under two heads: the first, that which relates to the libels of all descriptions, which are alleged to be published against the French government; the last, comprehending the five complaints which relate to the emigrants resident in this country. On the first, I am sure you must be aware that his majesty cannot, and never will, in consequence of any representation or any menace from a foreign power, make any concession, which can be in the smallest degree dangerous to the liberty of the press, as secured by the constitution of this country. This liberty is justly dear to every British subject. The constitution admits of no previous restraints upon publications of any description; but there exists judicatures, wholly independent of the executive government, capable of taking cognizance of such publications as the law deems to be criminal, and which are bound to inflict the punishment the delinquents may deserve; these judicatures may take cognizance, not only of libels against the government and the magistracy of this kingdom, but, as has been repeatedly experienced, of publications defamatory of those in whose hands the administration of foreign governments is placed. That our government neither has, nor wants any other protection than what the laws of the country afford; and though they are willing and ready to give to every foreign government all the protection against offences of this nature, which the principle of their laws and constitution will admit, they never can consent to new-model their laws, or to change their constitution, to gratify the wishes of any foreign power. If the present French government are dissatisfied with our laws on the subject of libels, or entertain the opinion that the administration of justice in our courts is too tardy and lenient, they have it in their power to redress themselves by punishing the venders and distributors of such publications within their own territories, in any manner that they may think proper, and thereby preventing the circulation of them. If they think their present laws are not sufficient for this purpose, they may enact new ones; or, if they think it expedient, they may exercise the right which they have of prohibiting the importation of any foreigner newspapers, or periodical publications, into the territories of the French republic. His majesty will not complain of such a measure, as it is not his intention to interfere in the manner in which the people or territories of France should be governed; but he expects, on the other hand, that the French government will not interfere in the manner in which the government of his dominions is conducted, or call for a change in those laws with which his people are perfectly satisfied. With respect to the distinction which appeared to be drawn in M. Otto's note, between the publications of British subjects and those of foreigners, and the power which his majesty is supposed to have in consequence of the Alien act, of sending foreigners out of his dominions, it is important to observe, that the provisions of that act were made for the purpose of preventing the residence of foreigners, whose numbers and principles had a tendency to disturb the internal peace of his own dominions, and whom the safety of those dominions might require in many instances to be removed, even if their actual conduct had not exposed them to punishment by law. It does not follow that it would be a warrantable application of such a law to exert its powers in the cases of individuals, such as those of whom complaint is now made, and particularly as they are liable to be prosecuted under the law of the land, in like manner as others have been in similar cases, at the instance and upon the complaint of foreign governments.

The second general head, which includes the five last complaints, relates to the removal of some of the French emigrants resident in this country. His majesty entertained hopes that the explanation furnished on this head, in my dispatch No. 14, would have proved satisfactory, and would have precluded the necessity of any farther discussion on this subject. The French government have, upon several occasions, resorted on this part of the subject to precedent, and have particularly rested on the demand formerly made by this country, that the person then called the Pretender should be sent from the French dominions.—It is important that the differences between these two cases should be stated. When James 2nd abdicated the throne, and left this country, he retired with his adherents to France; and though, in the war which immediately succeeded that event, the French government adopted his cause as their own, no stipulation was made at the treaty of Ryswick, that he should be sent from that country, nor was any subsequent demand ever made to the French government to this effect; but he was suffered to remain at St. Germain, in the neighbourhood of Paris, surrounded by his family and friends, till the time of his death.—It was not till after his demise, when Lewis 14th, in direct violation of the treaty of Ryswick, had acknowledged his son as king of Great Britain, that a different course of proceeding was adopted by the British government: and in the treaty of peace, signed at Utrecht, which put an end to the war which had been carried on, on account of the Spanish Succession, an article was inserted to prevent the Pretender from residing in any part of the French dominions. The demand which was subsequently made

Digitized by Google

for the removal of the Pretender from a town which was situated in the centre of these dominions, was founded on this article of the treaty, which was, in fact, one of the conditions of the peace; but both the article in the treaty and the demand were confined to the Pretender personally, and were not extended to any of his family, or to any of his adherents. After his removal, many of his adherents continued to reside in France; many persons resident in this country, who were attached to the cause of the Pretender, and had promoted the rebellion in his favour, and who were consequently attainted for high treason, sought refuge in France, and were permitted to remain there till their death, without any application ever having been made by the British government for their removal. The duke of Berwick, the natural son of James 2nd, who, from his principles and talents, was the most dangerous man to the interests of this country and the protestant succession, continued to be a general in the French armies, and though descended from the king, an Englishman, and an emigrant, it was not required that he should be sent out of France. In the present case, there is no article in the treaty of peace, by which his majesty is bound to send from this country any Frenchman whatever, except on account of the crimes specified in the twentieth article of the definitive treaty, and in consequence of the proofs therein required having been adduced. In the present case, it cannot be pretended that his majesty has ever given the slightest countenance to the cause of the royalists in France against the present government, since the period when he acknowledged that government; and if there were not these important differences in the two cases, they would be totally dissimilar in the only remaining point; for in the case of the house of Stuart, as has been already stated, notwithstanding the violence of the times, and the danger to which the protestant succession was really exposed, this strong act of authority was confined to the person of the Pretender: and the individual who must be recognized in that character by the French government, and whose case can alone bear any similarity to the former, even in this respect, is not, and never has been, within his majesty's dominions: other precedents might be adduced on this subject; but it is not necessary to state them, as the foregoing are sufficient.

With respect to the complaints in detail, under the second head.—Upon the first, you may inform the French government, that the emigrants in Jersey, many of whom had remained there solely on account of the cheapness of subsistence, had actually removed, or were removing, previous to the representation concerning them, in M. Otto's note, and that, before your explanation with M. Talleyrand can take place, there will probably not be an emigrant in the island.

To the second complaint, which relates to the bishops of Arras and St. Pol de Leon, and others, his majesty can only reply, that if the fact alleged against them can be substantiated; if it can be proved that they have distributed papers on the coast of France, with a view of disturbing the government, and of inducing the people to resist the new church establishment, his majesty would think himself justified in taking all measures within his power for obliging them to leave the country; but some proof must be adduced of those facts; and such proof must not be that of their having, in a single instance, viz. in reply to the pope's mandate, published a vindication of their own conduct, in refusing to conform to the new establishment; a proceeding in which they would be justifiable on every principle of toleration and justice; but it should show that they have since availed themselves of their situation in this country, to excite the people of France against the authority of that government, whether civil or ecclesiastical.

On the third complaint, which respects the removal of Georges, and those persons supposed to be described as his adherents, M. Otto must have mistaken me, in what he supposes me to have said on that subject. His majesty is, however, very desirous to obviate any cause of complaint or uneasiness with respect to these persons; and measures are in contemplation, and will be taken, for the purpose of removing them out of his majesty's European dominions.

On the fourth complaint, respecting the princes of the house of Bourbon, I can only refer you to my former answer. His majesty has no desire that they should continue to reside in this country, if they are disposed, or can be induced, to quit it; but he feels it to be inconsistent with his honour, and his sense of justice, to withdraw from them the rights of hospitality, as long as they conduct themselves peaceably and quietly; and unless some charge can be substantiated of their attempting to disturb the peace which subsists between the two governments.

With respect to the fifth complaint, which relates to the French emigrants wearing, in this country, the orders of their ancient government; there are few, if any, persons of that description in this country who wear such orders. It might be more proper if they all abstained from it; but the French government could not persist in expecting, that, even if it were consistent with law, his majesty could be induced to commit so harsh an act of authority as to send them out of the country on such an account.

I have thus stated to you his majesty's sentiments on the several points contained in M. Otto's note. You will take an early opportunity of communicating these sentiments to the French government, and of accompanying them with the arguments and explanations above stated. And if it should be desired, and you should be of an opinion that

Digitized by Google

it was likely to produce any good effect, there is no objection to your putting the substance of what you shall have stated in writing, and of delivering it to the minister for foreign affairs, as a memorandum of your conversation.

Upon the general tone and style of M. Otto's note, it is important to observe, that it is far from conciliating; and that the practice of presenting notes of this description, on any motive or suggestion of personal irritation, cannot fail to have the effect of indisposing the two governments towards each other, instead of consolidating and strengthening the peace which happily subsists between them. That after a war, in which the passions of men have been roused beyond all former examples, it is natural to suppose that the distrust, jealousy, and other hostile feelings of individuals should not immediately subside; and, under these circumstances, it appears to be both the interest and the duty of the two governments, by a mild and a temperate conduct, gradually to allay these feelings, and not, on the contrary, to provoke and augment them, by untimely irritation on their part, and by ascribing proceedings like those above noticed, to causes to which they have no reference.—His majesty has thus fully and frankly explained his sentiments, and the ground of his conduct. He is sincerely disposed to adopt every measure for the preservation of peace, which is consistent with the honour and independence of the country, and with the security of its laws and constitution. But the French government must have formed a most erroneous judgment of the disposition of the British nation, and of the character of its government, if they have been taught to expect that any representation of a foreign power will ever induce them to consent to a violation of those rights on which the liberties of the people of this country are founded. I have, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 14.—Note from M. Otto to lord Hawkesbury, dated August 21, 1802.

General Vial, minister plenipotentiary of the republic at Malta, having set out for his destination, about the 20th of July, it is to be presumed, that he will soon be in a condition to enter into a concert with his Britannic majesty's minister plenipotentiary, on the evacuation of Malta, and of its dependencies.

The three months, in which this evacuation should have taken place, are expired; and it being the intention of the two governments, that the execution of the treaty of Amiens should experience the least possible delay, the first consul would have been desirous that the two thousand Neapolitans, who are ready to depart, could have been transported, at an early period, to the island of Malta, to be in readiness whenever the evacuation shall be on the point of being effected.

It appears, nevertheless, that Mr. Drummond, the English minister at Naples, has not been authorized by his government to facilitate this transport; and that the motive alleged by that minister was, that the stipulations, which ought to precede the evacuation, not being fulfilled, that evacuation could not yet take place.

In communicating the above details to his excellency lord Hawkesbury, his Britannic majesty's principal secretary of state for the foreign department, the undersigned is directed to observe, that the sending the two thousand Neapolitans to the island of Malta cannot but be considered as a preliminary step, in order to accelerate the evacuation, as soon as the necessary measures shall have been taken by the respective plenipotentiaries; and that it does not in any manner prevent the subsequent concert on the details of the evacuation, conformably to the clauses of the treaty of Amiens.

The undersigned is moreover directed to request the British ministry to give general instructions to his majesty's plenipotentiaries at Naples, and at Malta, that the evacuation, and the other conditions of the 10th article, may be executed without obstacle, and without these plenipotentiaries conceiving themselves obliged to refer to their government, on each of the successive operations which should take place. The undersigned, &c.

(Signed) OTTO.

No. 15.—Note from Lord Hawkesbury to M. Otto, dated August 23rd, 1802.

The undersigned has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of M. Otto's note of the 21st instant. When the Neapolitan government notified to Mr. Drummond, the king's minister at Naples, that the two thousand troops which his Sicilian majesty had selected to serve in Malta, were ready to proceed to their destination, that gentleman declined taking any step to facilitate their embarkation, till he should receive intelligence of the arrival of sir Alexander Ball in that island, and till he should be informed that the commander in chief of the British forces had made suitable preparations for their reception. By the last advices from Malta it appears, that sir Alexander Ball had arrived there on the tenth of last month, and that, after having conferred with general Fox upon the subject, he had written to Mr. Drummond, that there was no impediment whatever to the immediate reception of the Neapolitan troops, and that their quarters would be prepared accordingly; the undersigned has the honour to state this to M. Otto as the most satisfactory answer which he can give to his note. It is probable, therefore, that the troops of his Sicilian majesty are already embarked and on their passage; but to prevent the possibility of any unnecessary delay or misconception, the most explicit instructions will be immediately forwarded to Mr. Drummond on this subject.

Digitized by Google

With respect to the other points in M. Otto's note, the undersigned can only repeat what he has before stated to him, that his majesty is most sincerely desirous to see all the stipulations of the 10th article of the definitive treaty carried into effect with the utmost punctuality, and with the least possible delay. With this view he takes this opportunity of observing to M. Otto, that, by the very last dispatches from the English ambassador at St. Petersburgh, the French minister at that court had not even then received any instructions from his government relative to the steps to be taken in concert with lord St. Helens, for inviting the emperor to become guarantee of the provisions and stipulations of the article in question. The French minister at Berlin was in the same predicament. The undersigned, therefore, requests that M. Otto would have the goodness to represent these circumstances to his government, and to urge them, if they have not already done it, to transmit, without delay, to their ministers at those courts, the necessary instructions for bringing this part of the business to a conclusion. The undersigned, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 16.—Extract of a dispatch from Mr. Merry to Lord Hawkesbury, dated October 3rd, 1802.

As soon as the Helvetic government had retired from Berne to Lausanne, the partizans of the ancient federative system of the Swiss cantons, who established immediately in the former city a provisional government, deputed a Confidential to Paris, for the purpose of counteracting the measures of M. Stapfer, and of engaging the first consul to suffer the inhabitants of Switzerland to settle their affairs amongst themselves. He was instructed in any emergency to address himself to the ministers here of the principal powers of Europe, and to solicit their interference and assistance in the objects of his mission. He reached Paris four days ago, and had reason to flatter himself, from the result of an interview which he had immediately with M. Talleyrand, that the first consul would put no obstacle in the way of any arrangement which the Swiss might agree upon among themselves for the final settlement of their government; he was therefore much surprised to learn, soon afterwards, that a change had taken place in the first consul's sentiments, and his astonishment was completed when he found that the latter had taken so decided and so unfavourable a part in the business as that which is announced by a resolution published in yesterday's Moniteur (which I have the honour to transmit enclosed), in the form of an address to the inhabitants of Switzerland. This person having, besides this public declaration, acquired some private information of its being the first consul's intention to give the most immediate and vigorous effect to it, lost no time in addressing a letter to the latter, in which he took the liberty of stating that he must have been deceived by false representations, that his interference in the affairs of Switzerland was, as he was authorized to say, entirely unsolicited by the majority and the best thinking part of the inhabitants, and that he had therefore to entreat of him, in the most earnest manner, to suspend the execution of his resolution until those explanations could take place, which he trusted might be the means of preventing the immense effusion of blood which would otherwise inevitably ensue. He at the same time addressed himself, in the course of yesterday, to me, as well as to the Austrian and Spanish ambassadors, and to the Russian and Prussian ministers (not having gained admittance to M. de Cobenzel, nor to M. de Markoff or Lucchesini, he afterwards wrote to them), soliciting, in the strongest terms, an interference (jointly, if possible) on their part, with the French government, to endeavour to avert the impending evil. I naturally observed to him, in answer, that the present state of political relations between the great powers of Europe afforded no prospect of his obtaining of their ministers at Paris to adopt a concerted measure in favour of the object which he had so much at heart, and that of course I could not take it individually upon myself, without any express instruction from my government. He returned to me to-day, to acquaint me that he was not only as yet without a reply from any quarter, but had reason to fear that his prayers would not be listened to by the Austrian, Russian, and Prussian ministers; he therefore conjured me to transmit them to his majesty's government, from whom only his countrymen could have a hope of deriving any assistance in the terrible conflict which he knew they were determined to stand, and which would only cease by the extermination of every virtuous and brave man in the country. He then put into my hand a note, which he had drawn up in a hurry, and of which I enclose a copy. Whilst, my lord, it was out of my power to give him any encouragement to expect from his majesty's government the assistance which his petition expresses, I have thought it my duty to lose no time in making you acquainted with a state of things which may shortly be attended with very important consequences.

[Note referred to in No. 16.]

So long as Switzerland was occupied by the French armies, the wishes of the people could never be freely manifested. The petty revolutions which took place in the government were the mere tricks of certain factions, in which the nation at large took but a very trifling interest. Scarcely did Switzerland think herself independent when she was desirous of returning to her ancient institutions, rendered still dearer to her by her late misfortunes, and the arbitrary acts of the government furnished her with the means of doing

Digitized by Google

so. Almost the whole of Switzerland, with unexampled unanimity and moderation, shook off the yoke. The cantons formed themselves into constituent bodies, and twelve of the thirteen cantons of Switzerland sent their representatives to the diet of Schwitz, in order there to organize a central power which might be acceptable to the neighbouring powers.

The aristocratical cantons renounced their exclusive rights: the Pays de Vaud was left at liberty to form its own constitution, as well as Thurgovia and the other new cantons.

The government having taken refuge at Lausanne, was by no means secure there, notwithstanding its regular troops; perhaps even at the present moment it no longer exists.

Who would not have thought that, according to the stipulation of the treaty of Luneville, which grants independence to Switzerland and the right of choosing its own government, every thing was settled, and that this nation might see its former happiness and tranquillity revive?

Who could have thought that the first consul would have issued such a decree as that of the 8th Vendemiaire?

Is an independent nation to be thus treated? Should Buonaparté persist in his determination, and the other powers should not interpose in our favour, it only remains for us either to bury ourselves in the ruins of our houses, although without hope of resistance, exhausted as we are by the Colossus who is about to overwhelm us, or to debase ourselves in the eyes of the whole universe!

Will the government of this generous nation, which has at all times afforded so many proofs of the interest it takes in the welfare of the Swiss, do nothing for us under circumstances which are to decide whether we are still to be ranked amongst free people?

We have only men left us:—the revolution, and spoliations without end, have exhausted our means; we are without arms, without ammunition, without stores, and without money to purchase them.

No. 17.—Note from Lord Hawkesbury to M. Otto, dated October 10th, 1802.

Lord Hawkesbury has received his majesty's commands to communicate, through M. Otto, to the French government, the sentiments of deep regret which have been excited in his majesty's mind by the address of the first consul to the Helvetic people, which was published by authority in the Moniteur of the 1st instant, and by the representations which have been made to his majesty on this subject, on behalf of the nation whose interests are so immediately affected by it. His majesty most sincerely laments the convulsions to which the Swiss cantons have for some time past been exposed; but he can consider their late exertions in no other light than as the lawful efforts of a brave and generous people to recover their ancient laws and government, and to procure the re-establishment of a system which experience has demonstrated not only to be favourable to the maintenance of their domestic happiness, but to be perfectly consistent with the tranquillity and security of other powers.

The cantons of Switzerland unquestionably possess, in the same degree as every other independent state, the right of regulating their own internal concerns; and this right has moreover, in the present instance, been formally and explicitly guaranteed to the Swiss nation by the French government, in the treaty of Luneville, conjointly with the other powers who were parties to that engagement. His majesty has no other desire than that the people of Switzerland, who now appear to be so generally united, should be left at liberty to settle their own internal government without the interposition of any foreign powers; and with whatever regret his majesty may have perused the late proclamation of the French government, he is yet unwilling to believe that they will farther attempt to control that independent nation in the exercise of their undoubted rights. His majesty thinks himself called upon by his regard for the general interests of Europe, and by his peculiar solicitude for the happiness and welfare of the Swiss nation, to express these his sentiments with a frankness and sincerity which he feels to be due to his character, and to the good understanding which he is desirous of preserving with the government of France.

No. 18.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Mr. Moore, dated October 10th, 1802.

Sir;—His majesty having deemed it expedient, that a confidential person should be sent, at the present moment, to Switzerland, in consequence of the communication which he has received from the Swiss confederacy, through their representative at Paris, I am commanded to inform you that he has made choice of you for that purpose.

It is of the utmost consequence, considering the nature of the business with which you are entrusted, that you should lose no time in taking your departure from hence, and that you should make every practicable exertion to arrive on the frontiers of Switzerland with as little delay as possible. You will inform yourself there what is the actual residence of the government of the Swiss confederation, to which you will immediately repair. Having taken the proper means to obtain a confidential interview with the persons who may be entrusted with the principal direction of affairs, you will communicate to them a copy of the note verbale which I delivered to M. Otto, and which is herewith inclosed; and you will take every opportunity of impressing upon their minds the deep interest which his majesty takes in the success of their exertions. You will state to them, that his majesty entertains hopes that his representation

Digitized by Google

to the French government may have the effect of inducing the first consul to abandon his intention of compelling the Swiss nation by force to renounce that system of government under which they had so long prospered, and to which they appear to be almost unanimously anxious to return. In this event his majesty will feel himself bound to abstain from all interference on his part; it being his earnest desire that the Swiss nation should be left at liberty to regulate their own internal concerns, without the interposition of any foreign power. If, however, contrary to his majesty's expectations, the French government should persist in the system of coercion announced in the proclamation of the first consul, inserted in the Moniteur of the 1st instant, you will, in that case, inform yourself, by every means in your power, of the disposition of the people at large of the Swiss confederacy, and particularly of those who have the direction of their affairs, and of those who possess the greatest share of influence amongst them, to persevere in the defence of their rights, and in the maintenance of the system they have adopted. You will likewise inquire into the means of defence of which they may be possessed, and of the probability of their being exerted with success. You will on no account encourage them to persevere in active measures of resistance which they are not themselves desirous to adopt, or which they may believe are unlikely to be ultimately effectual. If, however, you should find that the people of the Swiss confederacy are generally determined to persevere in the maintenance of their independence, and of their right to return to their ancient system of government: and if you should be of opinion that, from the union that subsists amongst the people, and from their zeal and enthusiasm in the cause in which they are engaged, they are finally resolved, at all hazards, to resist the threatened attempt of the French government to interpose, by force of arms, in the settlement of their internal concerns; you will then immediately communicate, in confidence, to the Swiss government, that, either in the event of a French army having entered the country, or in the event of your having reason to be convinced that a French army is actually advancing for that purpose, his majesty has authorized you to accede to their application for pecuniary succours.

I have furnished you with a cypher and decypher, that you may have it in your power to correspond with his majesty's ministers at Vienna and Munich, if you should think it advisable; and as it is highly probable that the armies of the Swiss confederacy may be inadequately supplied with arms, ammunition, or provisions, and may be desirous of procuring supplies thereof from the neighbouring countries, you will use your utmost endeavours to give them every facility for this purpose. You will be very particular in informing me of the numbers and situation of any Austrian corps in the neighbourhood of Switzerland, and of the probability of their advancing in any event into the Swiss territory.

As it is of great importance that his majesty's government should be regularly informed of the events which may be passing in Switzerland, and of the dispositions that may prevail there, you will endeavour to ascertain the most safe and expeditious mode of conveying your letters which will avoid their passing through any part of the French republic.

As it is possible that, previous to your arrival in Switzerland, the present state of affairs may have undergone a decided alteration, either in consequence of the submission of the Swiss cantons, or of any compromise having taken place as to their internal concerns it will be proper that, in that case, you should take up your residence in such a situation as you may think most convenient in the neighbourhood of Switzerland, of which you will give me the earliest intelligence, and there wait for his majesty's further orders. I am, sir, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 19.—Dispatch from Mr. Moore to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Constance, October 31st, 1802.

My Lord;—I have the honour to inform your lordship that I arrived here on the 27th instant, and that, having received this evening authentic information of the submission of the diet of Switzerland, assembled at Schwitz, to the French arms, I lose no time in dispatching the messenger Shaw with this intelligence; from which your lordship will perceive that it only remains for me to obey that part of my instructions by which I am directed, under such circumstances, to take up my residence in the neighbourhood of Switzerland, and there to await his majesty's further orders. I have, &c.

(Signed) FRA. MOORE.

No. 20.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Mr. Moore, dated November 25th, 1802.

Sir;—I have duly received your several letters by the messenger Shaw. As from the present state of Switzerland, your continuance in the vicinity of that country appears to be no longer necessary, you are at liberty to return to England as soon as it may suit your convenience. I am, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 21.—Extract of a Dispatch from Mr. Liston to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Hague, October 13th, 1802.

A few hours after I had sent off my last dispatch to your lordship (on Saturday the 9th of this month), the French ambassador, M. de Semonville, waited upon the president of the government of state, and informed him that he had just received, by a courier from

Digitized by Google

Paris, orders to inform the government of this country,

"Que le premier consul avoit appris, avec autant de surprise que d'indignation, que des personnes avides de révolutions vouloient de nouveau troubler le repos dans la Batavie, en abusant même pour cet effet de noms respectables: et que le premier consul, comme allié de la republique, invitoit le gouvernement à prendre toutes les mésures nécessaires pour maintenir l'ordre des choses etabli par la constitution."

These were nearly the words read to me by the secretary of state, from a note in his own hand-writing, dictated to him by M. de Semonville, with a view to its publication (and a translation was accordingly inserted in the Dutch official paper of the Hague on the 11th); but they fall very far short of the language employed by the French minister for foreign affairs in his dispatches to the ambassador, and in the communication made by him to the Dutch charge d'affaires at Paris (who also sent a messenger to the Hague upon this occasion). In these M. de Talleyrand entered into considerable detail on the subject of the plots supposed to be formed in this country against the administration, mentioned the names of the chiefs, and ended by making an offer, on the part of the first consul, to come to the assistance of the government (should circumstances render it necessary) with all his forces.

No. 22.—Dispatch from Mr. Liston to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Hague, October 29th, 1802.

My Lord;—The recent attack made by Buonaparté upon the liberties and independence of the Swiss cantons, has naturally made a strong impression on the inhabitants of this country; and the public anxiety has been much augmented by certain symptoms in the conduct of the consular government, which seem to indicate an intention not to withdraw the French troops, which have been kept in the Batavian republic for some time past, under the title of auxiliaries, and paid and maintained at the expence of the Dutch nation.

These troops (amounting to between ten and eleven thousand men) were to remain here till the conclusion of the definitive treaty with Great Britain. It was afterwards formally promised on the part of France, that they should evacuate the territories of the republic, at the latest, on the expiration of the last French year (the 23rd of September). They accordingly began their march to the southward a few days before that period; and the government and the people rejoiced at the prospect of being finally relieved from a load which has become extremely irksome to them. But, on pretence that a great portion of the corps were to be embarked at Flushing for Louisiana, and that there was a want of shipping for their accommodation, they took up their quarters at the frontiers of the country (at Bois-le-Duc, Breda, and Bergen-op-Zoom), where they still remain; and demands have continued to be made for their pay and maintenance.

Hopes were, however, entertained, from day to day, that their departure would take place; when, to the astonishment of the Batavian government, official notice was (last week) transmitted from France to the department of war at the Hague (which has been charged with the support of these corps), that the first consul has been pleased to appoint a new commander in chief (general Montrichard), and a new staff, for the auxiliary troops in this country; and the notice was given that government might provide for the pay of the officers in question.

The administration appear resolved to oppose all the resistance in their power to this unexpected and oppressive extortion. An express has been sent off to the Dutch ambassador at Paris, charging him to claim, in the most urgent terms, the accomplishment of the treaties subsisting between the two republics, and the fulfilment of the repeated and recent promises made by the French government upon this subject. And in case of the failure of this application, they talk of addressing themselves to the principal powers of Europe, who had any share or influence in the conclusion of the peace, to entreat their intervention and good offices, with a view to the maintenance of the independence of the republic. I have, &c.

ROBERT LISTON.

No. 23.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, dated November 30th, 1802.

His majesty's government have learnt with some surprise, from the communications from general Stuart, that that officer had signified to colonel Sebastiani his inability to evacuate Egypt, until he should receive specific orders for that purpose. It is certainly true that no warrant has been transmitted to general Stuart, or to his predecessor the earl of Cavan, for the evacuation of Egypt: neither was it considered to be necessary, inasmuch as his majesty's government had already expressed their intention to general Stuart, in his instructions, that, except in a case of absolute necessity, the king's troops should remain in Egypt no longer than the month of July last. In all the instances of places which had been conquered by the king's forces, and of which possession had been taken in his majesty's name, it has been usual, when they have been restored to the French republic, or its allies, that the commanding officer should be furnished with a regular warrant under the king's sign manual, authorizing him to make such restoration. But the case of Egypt is different, as that country had never been taken possession of in his majesty's name, as it had actually been restored to the Ottoman Porte,

Digitized by Google

and as certain stations in it were continued to be occupied merely as military posts, until the means of removing the troops should be provided.

It is probable that, in the present instance, general Stuart may have been misled by a doubt as to the extent of his own power, and by the opinion that he required a warrant to evacuate Egypt, similar to that which had been granted to officers who superintended the restitution of conquests of which possession had been taken in his majesty's name. In order, however, to obviate any farther difficulties, instructions have now been sent to general Stuart, directing him to remove the king's troops from Egypt with as little delay as possible, and information has been given to this effect to general Andreossy.

No. 24.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord St. Helens to Lord Hawkesbury, dated St. Petersburgh, July 20th, 1802.

I have since renewed my applications to this government on the business of Malta, and have some reason to hope, that some impression has been made on the mind of his imperial majesty. The French minister, however, has not yet received his instructions; and, till they arrive, it will, of course, be impossible for me to take the requisite steps for bringing this affair to any satisfactory, or even positive issue.

No. 25.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord St. Helens, to Lord Hawkesbury, dated St. Petersburgh, August 3rd, 1802.

I must not omit to acquaint your lordship, that, although, in order to prevent any further waste of time, I have thought it right to endeavour to obtain a definitive explanation of the intentions of this court, with relation to the proposed guarantee, I have not yet been enabled to demand it officially, according to the terms of the treaty of Amiens, as the French minister here is still without instructions authorizing him to join with me in that instance.

No. 26.—Extract of a Dispatch from Mr. Paget to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Vienna, July 18th, 1802.

On the 15th instant, M. de Champagny and I met at a conference at the vice-chancellor's, to whom we presented our respective notes, copies of which I have the honour to enclose, marked A. and B.

[Inclosure marked A. in No. 26.]

The undersigned, his Britannic majesty's envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, has the honour to transmit herewith to the vice-chancellor of court and state, a copy of the tenth article of the treaty of Amiens. He has, at the same time, the honour to acquaint his excellency that he has received orders from his court to invite his majesty the emperor and king, conformable to the 13th paragraph of that article, to give his guarantee to the arrangements stipulated therein. He therefore requests the vice-chancellor of court and state to lay this communication before his Imperial majesty.

(Signed) ARTHUR PAGET.
Vienna, 15th July, 1802.

[Inclosure marked B. in No. 26.]

The embassador of the French republic, on the invitation which has been given him by Mr. Paget, his Britannic majesty's minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary, hastens, in conjunction with that minister, to communicate to the vice-chancellor of court and state, the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens, concerning the order and island of Malta, the sixth paragraph of which article places the independency of the island of Malta under the guarantee of his Imperial majesty, and several other powers of Europe. In taking this step, the ambassador, who has not received any orders respecting it, acts from the knowledge he has of the intention of his government to execute all the stipulations of the treaties it has concluded. The ambassador seizes, with eagerness, this opportunity to offer to his excellency the assurances of his high consideration.—Vienna, 26th Messidor, year 10.

(Signed) CHAMPAGNY.
COUNT COBENZEL.

No. 27.—Extract of a Dispatch from Mr. Paget to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Vienna, August 22nd, 1802.

I have the honour herewith to transmit to your lordship the emperor's act of guarantee and accession to the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens.

[Inclosure referred to in No. 27.]

The emperor and king having been invited by his Britannic majesty and the first consul of the French republic to accede to the stipulations contained in the 10th article of the treaty concluded and signed at Amiens on the 29th of March, 1802 (4th Germinal, year 10), respecting the order of St. John of Jerusalem; and also to take under his protection and guarantee, conjointly with the other powers cited in the sixth paragraph of the said article, whatever was therein especially stipulated on the subject of the island of Malta: and his Imperial and Royal Apostolic majesty having been, at the same time, informed that the two above-mentioned powers adopted on their part the concert which had been entered into by the two imperial courts, previous to the exchange of the ratifications of the above-mentioned treaty of Amiens, to leave to the pope the selection of a grand master from amongst the candidates nominated for that purpose by the priories of the order: his majesty, the emperor and king, desirous, on the present occasion, of exhibiting a fresh proof of his sincere friendship for his majesty, the king of

Digitized by Google

Great Britain, and for the first consul of the French republic, has empowered and instructed his grand chamberlain and cabinet minister, count Francis of Colloredo, and his vice-chancellor of court and state, count Lewis of Cobenzel, to proceed in his name to the accession and guarantee of the stipulations of the tenth article of the aforementioned treaty; who, in virtue thereof, declare that his majesty accedes, by the present act, to the stipulations contained in this article, with the clause herein-before referred to, respecting the mode of the next election of the grand master of the order; and his majesty specifically guarantees whatsoever is therein regulated, with regard to the independence of the islands of Malta, Gozo, and Comino.

In witness whereof we, the plenipotentiaries of his Imperial Royal and Apostolic majesty, have signed the present act of accession and of guarantee; have thereunto affixed the seal of our arms, and have exchanged it against the acts of acceptation, delivered in the name of his majesty the king of Great Britain, and of the first consul of the French republic. Which acts of accession, of guarantee, and of acceptation, shall be ratified in the space of four weeks, or sooner, if it can be done.—Done at Vienna, the 20th of August, 1802.

(L. S.) Francis Count of Colloredo.
(L. S.) Lewis Count of Cobenzel.

No. 28.—Extract of a Dispatch from Mr. Casamajor to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Berlin, August 21st, 1802.

Having opened the subject of your lordship's last dispatch, relative to the accession of this court to the arrangement stipulated in the tenth article of the treaty of Amiens, to Mr. Bignon, this gentleman undertook, very willingly, to mention the same to his government, and has, in fact, already performed his promise. In several conversations with Mr. Bignon, in which I have occasionally remarked, that nothing had hitherto been said to me here upon the subject of Malta, he has constantly affected the greatest indifference, and treated it as a business of too little importance to occupy the attention of the French government.

No. 29.—Extract of a Dispatch from Mr. Casamajor to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Berlin, August 31st, 1802.

Mr. Bignon received, last night, instructions from the French government, to invite the king of Prussia, conjointly with me, to accede to the guarantee of the independence of the island of Malta, and of the other stipulations relating to that island, which are contained in the tenth article of the definitive treaty of Amiens. Mr. Bignon sent to me immediately, and we propose to meet to-morrow, for the purpose of preparing a note upon this subject, of which we shall each present a copy to count Haugwitz.

No. 30.—Extract of a Dispatch from Mr. Casamajor to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Berlin, October 2nd, 1802.

My note upon the subject of the guarantee of Malta remains unanswered.

No. 31.—Extract of a Dispatch from Mr. Jackson to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Berlin, November 25th, 1802.

At my first interview with count Haugwitz, I told him, that the only subject in suspense between our two courts, to which I need call his immediate attention, was that of the guarantee of Malta, on which an answer is still due from him. He adverted to what he had told Mr. Casamajor, of the king his master having ordered a report to be made to him on the state of the commanders in Silesia, hinting, that this country took a very slight interest in the fate of the island; and that he was countenanced in withholding its guarantee by the example of Spain. He, however, added, that the report in question had been made to the king, and that he only waited his majesty's commands to confer with me further upon the subject.

No. 32.—Extract of a Dispatch from Mr. Garlike to Lord Hawkesbury, dated St. Petersburgh, September 17th, 1802.

The French minister has, at length, been directed by his government to make, conjointly with his majesty's minister here, a formal invitation to the emperor of Russia for his Imperial majesty's guarantee of the stipulations of the treaty of Amiens, which provide for the independence of the islands of Malta, Gozo, and Comino, and of the other arrangements of that article.

No. 33.—Extract of a Dispatch from sir John Borlase Warren to lord Hawkesbury, dated St. Petersburgh, Nov. 18, 1802.

On the 3rd instant, I waited upon the chancellor with general Hedouville, when the note of invitation for his imperial majesty's guarantee of the tenth article of the treaty of Amiens was presented by each of us. General de Hedouville entered into various reasons to induce the Russian government to grant the guarantee; the principal of which was to prove, that, without the guarantee of Russia either of the two powers, upon the first difference between them, would look upon themselves at liberty to seize upon the island, which was only important in a military point of view; and the only alteration he should make in his invitation was, that the island might be delivered up to the Neapolitan troops. He added that the act of guarantee would not be considered as affecting the arrangement of any particular power with the order, or of any alteration that power might wish to make in the baillages, or that part belonging to itself, as Spain had already done.

Digitized by Google

No. 34—Extract of a Dispatch from sir John Borlase Warren to lord Hawkesbury, dated St. Petersburgh, Nov. 25, 1802.

The chancellor appointed yesterday evening for delivering to me, and to the French minister the answer of the Russian government to his majesty's invitation for his imperial majesty's accession to the tenth article of the treaty of Amiens.

[Inclosure referred to in No. 34.]

Conditions upon which his Imperial Majesty of all the Russias is willing to accede to the stipulations of the 10th article of the Treaty of Amiens.

1. The acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the order of St. John of Jerusalem over the island of Malta and its dependencies; the acknowledgment of the grand master, and of the civil government of the order, according to its ancient institutions, with the admission into it of native Maltese. Upon this point, as well as upon every other that may relate to its interior organization, the legal government of the order shall have the power to enact and prescribe such regulations as it may judge best calculated to promote the future welfare and prosperity of the order.

2. The rights of the king of the Two Sicilies as suzerain of the island shall remain upon the same footing as they were previous to the war which is now terminated by the treaty of Amiens.

3. The independence and neutrality of the island of Malta, its ports and dependencies, shall be secured and guaranteed by the respective contracting powers, who shall mutually engage to acknowledge and maintain that neutrality in all cases of war; whether between each other, or between any of them, and any other power, not excepting his Sicilian majesty, whose right of suzerainty shall not extend so as to enable him to cause a departure from the neutrality of the island, as guarranteed by the present act.

4th. Until the order shall be in a situation to provide, by its own resources, for the maintenance of its independence and neutrality, as secured by the preceding article, as well as for the defence of their principal residence, the different forts shall be occupied by his Sicilian majesty's troops, who shall send a sufficient force for the defence of the island and its dependencies, the number of which shall be agreed upon by his said majesty and the two contracting powers, who shall take upon themselves, conjointly, the expense of maintaining the whole of the said troops, so long as the defence of the island shall continue to be entrusted to them, during which period, the said troops shall be under the authority of the grand master of his government.

5. The present additional act shall be considered as forming an integral part of the treaty of Amiens, the same as if it had been inserted therein, word for word, and shall be executed in like manner.

6. Their majesties the emperor of all the Russias, the emperor of the Romans, the king of Spain, the king of the Two Sicilies, and the king of Prussia, shall be invited to accede to this act as guarantees.

(Signed) Comte Alexandre de Woronzow.

No. 35.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, Jan. 27, 1803.

My Lord;—I have to report to your lordship the purport of a conversation I had on Tuesday last, by appointment, with M. Talleyrand. He had invited me, some days ago, for this purpose. The communication he had to make to me related to two points, both equally important, as he said, to the maintenance of good harmony between the two countries; with this difference, however, that the one originated with himself, and was dictated by his anxiety to do away every thing which might feed the mutual irritation of the two countries; and the other, by the express order of the first consul. That which came from himself related to the English newspapers, against which he pronounced a most bitter philippic, assuring me, that the first consul was extremely hurt to find that his endeavours to conciliate, had hitherto produced no other effect, than to increase the abuse with which the papers in England continually loaded him. He expatiated much upon this topic, and endeavoured to establish a fact, which I assured him a reference to any one newspaper in Paris would instantly refute, that, during four months not a word of provocation had appeared in any French journal, which could justify a retort from those published in England. For the rest he advanced nothing but what has been said on more than one occasion to Mr. Merry, and reported by him to your lordship. I was, however, given to understand, that the first consul was, in fact, highly incensed, and the more so, he was pleased to say, as it came from a country of whose good opinion he was so very ambitious.

In my reply, I could but go over the old ground, and endeavour to make M. Talleyrand understand—first, that whatever was said in English papers, might be considered but as a national retaliation for what was published in the French papers—secondly, that what was officially published here, was by no means so in England—and, thirdly, that although the government possessed a control over the press in France, the English government neither had, nor could have, unless they purchased it at the same price, any whatever in England. Upon this, he endeavoured to prove to me, that there were papers in England attached to different parties, and went over their names and supposed connexion with great precision; and that, consequently, his majesty's ministers might so far control those, at least, which depended upon them, as to prevent their inserting that abuse which must be considered

Digitized by Google

as having their sanction. I endeavoured to explain to him what the influence was, which he supposed ministers to possess in England; that it amounted to nothing more than a preference which your lordship, for instance, might give to one paper rather than to another, by sending to it any articles of news which it might be wished to make public; but that your lordship's influence went no farther; and, that if the editor of such a paper conceived it more for his interest to continue to write after his own fancy, and uncontrolled, than to be the publisher of such occasional articles, in that case all influence was at an end. I told him, that if he had remarked any abusive article in any paper of such a description it was natural and fair to conclude, that it did not depend upon government to prevent it. He persisted in his opinion, that his majesty's ministers might keep certain papers in order, as I did, in assuring him, that, until the first consul could so master his feelings, as to be indifferent to the scurrility of the English prints, as the English government was to that which daily appeared in the French, this state of irritation was irremediable. I told him, however, that I would report the substance of this communication to your lordship, although I could assure him that your lordship could add nothing to the explanation which had been given, and in such detail, by Mr. Merry from your lordship.

M. Talleyrand, with great solemnity, required of me to inform him, and this by the express order of the first consul, what were his majesty's intentions with regard to the evacuation of Malta. He again, on this occasion, made great professions of his sincere desire to set aside every thing which could interrupt the good understanding between the two governments; adding, that it was absolutely necessary that the French government should know what it was meant to do, when that clause in the treaty of Amiens, which stipulates the cession of Malta, should be fully accomplished. He said that another grand master, would now be very soon elected; that all the powers of Europe, invited so to do, with the exception of Russia, whose difficulties it was easy to remove, and without whom the guarantee would be equally complete, were ready to come forward, and that, consequently, the term would very soon arrive, when Great Britain could have no pretext for keeping longer possession. I informed him that I would report his conversation to your lordship, and would have the honour of communicating to him your lordship's answer as soon as I could receive it. I have, &c. WHITWORTH.

No. 36.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, dated February 9, 1803.

My Lord;—In answer to your excellency's dispatch of Jan. 27th, relative to the inquiry made of you, by the French government, on the subject of Malta, I can have no difficulty in assuring you, that his majesty has entertained a most sincere desire that the treaty of Amiens might be executed in a full and complete manner; but it has not been possible for him to consider this treaty as having been founded on principles different from those which have been invariably applied to every other antecedent treaty of convention, namely, that they were negociated with reference to the actual state of possession of the different parties, and of the treaties of public engagements by which they were bound at the time of its conclusion; and that if that state of possession, and of engagements, was so materially altered by the act of either of the parties, as to affect the nature of the compact itself, the other party has a right, according to the law of nations, to interfere for the purpose of obtaining satisfaction or compensation for any essential difference which such acts may have subsequently made in their relative situation; that, if there ever was a case to which this principle might be applied with peculiar propriety, it was that of the late treaty of peace; for the negotiation was conducted on a basis not merely proposed by his majesty, but specially agreed to in an official note by the French government, viz. that his majesty should keep a compensation out of his conquests for the important acquisitions of territory made by France upon the continent. This is a sufficient proof that the compact was understood to have been concluded with reference to the then existing state of things; for the measure of his majesty's compensation was to be calculated with reference to the acquisitions of France at that time; and if the interference of the French government in the general affairs of Europe, since that period; if their interposition with respect to Switzerland and Holland, whose independence was guaranteed by them at the time of the conclusion of the treaty of peace; if the annexations which have been made to France in various quarters but particularly those in Italy, have extended the territory, and increased the power of the French government; his majesty would be warranted, consistently with the spirit of the treaty of peace, in claiming equivalents for these acquisitions, as a counterpoise to the augmentation of the power of France. His majesty, however anxious to prevent all ground of misunderstanding, and desirous of consolidating the general peace of Europe, as far as might be in his power, was willing to have waved the pretensions he might have a right to advance of this nature; and as the other articles of the definitive treaty have been in a course of execution on his part, so he would have been ready to have carried into effect the true intent and spirit of the 10th article, the execution of which, according to its terms, had been rendered impracticable by circumstances which it was not in his majesty's power to control. A communication to your lordship would accordingly have been prepared, conformably to this disposition, if the attention of his majesty's government had

Digitized by Google

not been attracted by the very extraordinary publication of the report of colonel Sebastiani to the first consul. It is impossible for his majesty to view this report in any other light than as an official publication; for without referring particularly to explanations, which have been repeatedly given upon the subject of publications in the Moniteur, the article in question, as it purports to be the report to the first consul of an accredited agent, as it appears to have been signed by colonel Sebastiani himself, and as it is published in the official paper, with an official title affixed to it, must be considered as authorized by the French government. This report contains the most unjustifiable insinuations, and charges against the officer who commanded his forces in Egypt and against the British army in that quarter; insinuations and charges wholly destitute of foundation, and such as would warrant his majesty in demanding that satisfaction, which, on occasions of this nature, independent powers, in a state of amity, have a right to expect from each other. It discloses, moreover, views in the highest degree injurious to the interests of his majesty's dominions, and directly repugnant to, and utterly inconsistent with, the spirit and letter of the treaty of peace, concluded between his majesty and the French government and his majesty would feel that he was wanting in a proper regard to the honour of his crown, and to the interests of his dominions, if he could see with indifference, such a system developed and avowed. His majesty cannot, therefore, regard the conduct of the French government, on various occasions, since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, the insinuations and charges contained in the report of colonel Sebastiani, and the views which that report discloses, without feeling it necessary for him, distinctly, to declare, that it will be impossible for him to enter into any further discussion relative to Malta, unless he receives satisfactory explanation on the subject of this communication.

Your excellency is desired to take an early opportunity of fully explaining his majesty's sentiments, as above stated, to the French government. I have, &c.

HAWKESBURY.

No. 37.—Extract of a Dispatch from lord Whitworth to lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, February 17th, 1803.

I have the honour to acquaint your lordship that I saw M. de Talleyrand on Tuesday last, for the purpose of carrying into effect your lordship's instructions of the 9th instant. I began by telling him that I had nothing new to communicate to him: but merely to confirm officially that which I had already from myself premised. I did not, however, pass over, with the same indifference, the arguments with which your lordship has furnished me. I recapitulated them all; the principle on which the treaty of Amiens was founded; and the right which naturally arose from that principle, of interference on our part for the purpose of obtaining satisfaction or compensation, for any essential differences which may have arisen in the relative situation of the two countries. I instanced the cases, beginning with Italy, and concluding with Switzerland, in which the territory or influence of France had been extended subsequent to the treaty of Amiens.

I represented to him, that this principle of compensation had been fully and formally admitted by the French government, in the course of the negotiation at Amiens. I then told him, that notwithstanding the indisputable right which his majesty might have derived of claiming some counterpoise for such acquisitions, instructions would have been given me, by which I should have been empowered to declare his majesty's readiness to carry into effect the full intent of the 10th article of the treaty, if the attention of his majesty's government had not been roused by the official publication of colonel Sebastiani's report to the first consul. It was useless to recapitulate the particulars of this very extraordinary report; but I appealed to him whether it was not of a nature, exclusive of the personal allusions it contained, to excite the utmost jealousy in the minds of his majesty's ministers, and to demand on their part every measure of precaution. I concluded with the distinct declaration, that it was impossible for his majesty to enter into any further discussion relative to Malta, unless he receives satisfactory explanations on the subject of the first consul's views.

M. de Talleyrand, in his reply, did not attempt to dispute the drift of my argument. He admitted with an affected tone of candour, that the jealousy we felt on the score of Egypt, with a view to our possessions in India, was natural. But he could not admit that any thing had appeared, in the conduct of the French government, in justification of the alarm we expressed. After repeating what he had said to me in a former conversation, on the subject of Sebastiani's mission, which he asserted to be strictly commercial, he expatiated, at great length, on the sincere desire of the first consul to maintain inviolable the peace which had been so lately concluded; adding, that the situation of the French finances was such, that were not this desire of peace in the first consul an effect of system, it would be most imperiously dictated to him by the total impossibility in which this country found itself of carrying on that extensive state of warfare, which even a partial rupture would naturally lead to. He expressed great surprise, therefore, that any suspicion should attach when the means of disturbing the public tranquillity were, as must be well known in England, so completely wanting; and desired to know what was the nature and degree of satisfaction which his majesty would require. On this I told him, that I could not pretend

Digitized by Google

to say by what means those apprehensions which the conduct of this government had raised in England, were to be allayed; but I could assure him, that, in the discussion of them, we should be animated solely by a sincere desire to be convinced of the truth of his assertions, since on that depended the peace and happiness of Europe. I took this opportunity of assuring him, that although, according to his statement of the situation of France, we might possess, in a greater degree, the means of supporting the expense of a war, since those means arose from sources which even a state of warfare did not dry up, yet such was his majesty's sincere desire of maintaining peace, that nothing but absolute and unavoidable necessity would ever induce him to deprive his subjects of the blessings which they begin to enjoy.

No. 38.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, Feb. 21, 1803.

My Lord;—My last dispatch, in which I gave your lordship an account of my conference with M. de Talleyrand, was scarcely gone, when I received a note from him, informing me that the first consul wished to converse with me, and desired I would come to him at the Thuilleries at 9 o'clock. He received me in his cabinet with tolerable cordiality, and, after talking on different subjects for a few minutes, he desired me to sit down, as he himself did on the other side of the table, and began. He told me that he felt it necessary, after what had passed between me and M. de Talleyrand, that he should, in the most clear and authentic manner, make known his sentiments to me, in order to their being communicated to his majesty; and he conceived this would be more effectually done by himself than through any medium whatever. He said that it was a matter of infinite disappointment to him, that the treaty of Amiens, instead of being followed by conciliation and friendship, the natural effects of peace, had been productive only of continual and increasing jealousy and mistrust, and that this mistrust was now avowed in such a manner as must bring the point to an issue.

He now enumerated the several provocations which he pretended to have received from England. He placed in the first line our not evacuating Malta and Alexandria, as we were bound to do by the treaty. In this, he said, that no consideration on earth should make him acquiesce; and, of the two, he had rather see us in possession of the Faux-bourg St. Antoine than Malta. He then adverted to the abuse thrown out against him in the English public prints; but this, he said, he did not so much regard as that which appeared in the French papers published in London. This he considered as much more mischievous, since it was meant to excite this country against him and his government. He complained of the protection given to Georges and others of his description, who, instead of being sent to Canada, as had been repeatedly promised, were permitted to remain in England, handsomely pensioned, and constantly committing all sorts of crimes on the coasts of France, as well as in the interior. In confirmation of this, he told me that two men had, within these few days, been apprehended in Normandy, and were now on their way to Paris, who were hired assassins, and employed by the bishop of Arras, by the baron de Rolle, by Georges, and by Dutheil, as would be fully proved in a court of justice, and made known to the world.

He acknowledged that the irritation he felt against England increased daily, because every wind (I make use as much as I can of his own ideas and expressions) which blew from England, brought nothing but enmity and hatred against him.

He now went back to Egypt, and told me that if he had felt the smallest inclination to take possession of it by force, he might have done it a month ago, by sending twenty-five thousand men to Aboukir, who would have possessed themselves of the whole country in defiance of the four thousand British in Alexandria. That instead of that garrison being a means of protecting Egypt, it was only furnishing him with a pretence for invading it. *This he should not do, whatever might be his desire to have it a colony, because he did not think it worth the risk of a war, in which he might, perhaps, be considered as the aggressor, and by which he should lose more than he could gain, since, sooner or later, Egypt would belong France, either by the falling to pieces of the Turkish empire, or by some arrangement with the Porte.*

As a proof of his desire to maintain peace, he wished to know what he had to gain by going to war with England. A descent was the only means of offence he had, and that he was determined to attempt, by putting himself at the head of the expedition. But how could it be supposed, that, after having gained the height on which he stood, he would risk his life and reputation in such a hazardous attempt, unless forced to it by necessity, when the chances were that he and the greatest part of the expedition would go to the bottom of the sea. He talked much on this subject, but never affected to diminish the danger. He acknowledged that there were one hundred chances to one against him, but still he was determined to attempt it, if war should be the consequence of the present discussion; and that such was the disposition of the troops, that army after army would be found for the enterprise.

He then expatiated much on the natural force of the two countries. France, with an army of four hundred and eighty thousand men; for to this amount it is, he said, *to be immediately completed*, all ready for the most

Digitized by Google

desperate enterprises; and England with a fleet that made her mistress of the seas, and which he did not think he should be able to equal in less than ten years. Two such countries, by a proper understanding, might govern the world, but by their strifes might overturn it. He said, that, if he had not felt the enmity of the British government, on every occasion, since the treaty of Amiens, there would have been nothing that he would not have done to prove his desire to conciliate; participation in indemnities, as well as in influence, on the continent; treaties of commerce; in short, any thing that could have given satisfaction, and have testified his friendship. Nothing, however, had been able to conquer the hatred of the British government, and, therefore, it was now come to the point whether we should have peace or war. To preserve peace, the treaty of Amiens must be fulfilled; the abuse in the public prints, if not totally suppressed, at least kept within bounds, and confined to the English papers; and the protection so openly given to his bitterest enemies (alluding to Georges, and persons of that description), must be withdrawn. If war, it was necessary only to say so, and to refuse to fulfil the treaty. He now made the tour of Europe, to prove to me that, in its present state, there was no power with which we could coalesce, for the purpose of making war against France; consequently it was our interest to gain time, and if we had any point to gain, renew the war when circumstances were more favourable. He said it was not doing him justice, to suppose that he conceived himself above the opinion of his country or of Europe. He would not risk uniting Europe against him, by any violent act of aggression, neither was he so powerful in France, as to persuade the nation to go to war, unless on good grounds. He said that he had not chastised the Algerines, from his unwillingness to excite the jealousy of other powers, but he hoped that England, Russia, and France would one day feel that it was their interest to destroy such a nest of thieves, and force them to live rather by cultivating their land, than by plunder.

In the little I said to him (for he gave me, in the course of two hours, but very few opportunities of saying a word), I confined myself strictly to the tenor of your lordship's instructions. I urged them in the same manner as I had done to M. de Talleyrand and dwelt as strongly as I could on the sensation which the publication of Sebastiani's report had created in England, where the views of France towards Egypt must always command the utmost vigilance and jealousy. He maintained that what ought to convince us of his desire of peace was, on the one hand, the little he had to gain by renewing the war, and, on the other, the facility with which he might have taken possession of Egypt, with the very ships and troops which were now going from the Mediterranean to St. Domingo, and that with the approbation of all Europe, and more particularly of the Turks, who had repeatedly invited him to join with them, for the purpose of forcing us to evacuate their territory.

I do not pretend to follow the arguments of the first consul in detail: this would be impossible, from the vast variety of matter which he took occasion to introduce. His purpose was evidently to convince me, that on Malta must depend peace or war, and, at the same time to impress upon my mind a strong idea of the means he possessed of annoying us at home and abroad,

With regard to the mistrust and jealousy which, he said constantly prevailed since the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens, I observed, that, after a war of such long duration, so full of rancour, and carried on in a manner of which history has no example, it was but natural that a considerable degree of agitation should prevail: but this, like the swell after a storm, would gradually subside, if not kept up by the policy of either party; that I would not pretend to pronounce which had been the aggressor in the paper war of which he complained, and which was still kept up, though with this difference, that in England it was independent of government, and in France its very act and deed. To this I added, that it must be admitted that we had such motives of mistrust against France, as could not be alleged against us; and I was going to instance the accession of territory and influence gained by France since the treaty, when he interrupted me, by saying, I suppose you mean Piedmont and Switzerland; "ce sont des bagatelles:" and it must have been foreseen, whilst the negotiation was pending; "Vous n'avez pas le droit d'en parler à cette heure." I then alleged, as a cause of mistrust and of jealousy, the impossibility of obtaining justice or any kind of redress, for any of his majesty's subjects.—He asked me in what respect; and I told him, that, since the signing of the treaty, not one British claimant had been satisfied, although every Frenchman of that description had been so within one month after that period; and that since I had been here, and I could say as much of my predecessors, not one satisfactory answer had been obtained, to the innumerable representations which we had been under the necessity of making in favour of British subjects and property detained in the several ports of France, and elsewere, without even a shadow of justice: such an order of things, I said, was not made to inspire confidence, but, on the contrary, must create mistrust. This, he said, must be attributed to the natural difficulties attending such suits, when both parties thought themselves right; but he denied that such delays could proceed from any disinclination to do what was just and right. With regard to the pensions which were granted to French or Swiss individuals, I observed that they were given as a reward for past services during the

Digitized by Google

war, and most certainly not for present ones, and still less for such as had been insinuated of a nature repugnant to the feelings of every individual in England, and to the universally acknowledged loyalty and honour of the British government. That as for any participation of indemnities, or other accessions which his majesty might have obtained, I could take upon myself to assure him, that his majesty's ambitions led him rather to preserve than to acquire. And that, with regard to the most propitious moment for renewing hostilities, his majesty, whose sincere desire it was, to continue the blessings of peace to his subjects, would always consider such a measure as the greatest calamity; but that, if his majesty was so desirous of peace, it must not be imputed to the difficulty of obtaining allies; and the less so, as those means which it might be necessary to afford such allies for, perhaps, inadequate services, would all be concentrated in England, and give a proportionate increase of energy to our own exertions.

At this part of the conversation, he rose from his chair, and told me that he should give orders to general Andreossy to enter on the discussion of this business with your lordship; but he wished that I should, at the same time, be made acquainted with his motives, and convinced of his sincerity, rather from himself than from his ministers. He then, after a conversation of two hours, during the greatest part of which he talked incessantly, conversed for a few moments on indifferent subjects, in apparent good humour, and retired.

Such was, nearly as I can recollect, the purport of this conference.

It must, however, be observed, that he did not, as M. Talleyrand had done, affect to attribute colonel Sebastiani's mission to commercial motives only, but as one rendered necessary, in a military point of view, by the infraction by us of the treaty of Amiens.

I have the honour to be, &c.

WHITWORTH.

P. S. This conversation took place on Friday last, and this morning I saw M. de Talleyrand. He had been with the first consul, after I left him, and he assured me that he had been very well satisfied with the frankness with which I had made my observations on what fell from him. I told him, that, without entering into any farther detail, what I had said to the first consul amounted to an assurance of what I trusted there could be no doubt, of the readiness of his majesty's ministers to remove all subjects of discussion, where that could be done without violating the laws of the country, and to fulfil strictly the engagements which they had contracted, inasmuch as that could be reconciled with the safety of the state.—As this applied to Malta and Egypt, he gave me to understand that a project was in contemplation, by which the integrity of the Turkish empire would be so effectually secured, as to do away every cause of doubt or uneasiness, either with regard to Egypt, or any part of the Turkish dominions. He could not then, he said, explain himself farther. Under these circumstances, no one can expect that we should relinquish that assurance which we have, in hand, till something equally satisfactory is proposed and adopted.

WHITWORTH.

No. 39.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, dated Feb. 18th, 1803.

My Lord;—Your excellency's dispatch of February 21st, has been received, and laid before the king.

I have great satisfaction in communicating to you his majesty's entire approbation of the able and judicious manner in which you appear to have executed the instructions which I gave to you in my dispatch of the 9th instant.

The account you have given of your interview with the first consul, is, in every respect, important. It is unnecessary for me to remark on the tone and temper in which the sentiments of the first consul appear to have been expressed, or to offer any observations in addition to those so properly made by your excellency, at the time, upon several of the topics which were brought forward by the first consul, in the course of your conversation; I shall therefore, content myself with referring your excellency to my dispatch to Mr. Merry, of August 28th, 1802, in which the subject of the complaints of the French government, respecting the freedom of the press, the emigrants, &c. are particularly discussed. I cannot, however, avoid noticing, that nothing approaching to explanation or satisfaction is stated to have been thrown out by the first consul, in answer to the just representations and complaints of his majesty, in consequence of the unwarrantable insinuations and charges contained in colonel Sebastiani's report against his majesty's government,—the officer commanding his forces in Egypt, and his army in that quarter; but that, on the other hand, the language of the first consul has tended to strengthen and confirm the suspicions which that publication was peculiarly calculated to excite.

I shall now proceed to give you some farther instructions on the language which it may be proper for you to hold respecting the charge which has been advanced against his majesty's government, of their unwillingness to fulfil the treaty of Amiens. The treaty of Amiens has been in a course of execution, on the part of his majesty, in every article in which, according to the spirit of that treaty, it has been found capable of execution. There cannot be the least doubt that Egypt is at this time completely evacuated. The delay which had arisen in the evacuation of Alexandria, was owing to accidental circumstances, the particulars of which were explained to you in my dispatch of the

Digitized by Google

30th November last: and I had every reason to believe, from the communication I had with general Andreossy on the subject, that the French government were perfectly satisfied with the explanation which he was authorized, at the time, to give them respecting it.

With regard to that article of the treaty which relates to Malta, the stipulations contained in it (owing to circumstances which it was not in the power of his majesty to control) have not been found capable of execution. The refusal of Russia to accede to the arrangement, except on condition that the Maltese langue should be abolished;—the silence of the court of Berlin, with respect to the invitation that has been made to it, in consequence of the treaty, to become a guaranteeing power;—the abolition of the Spanish priories, in defiance of the treaty to which the king of Spain was a party;—the declaration of the Portuguese government, of their intention to sequestrate the property of the Portuguese priory, as forming a part of the Spanish langue, unless the property of the Spanish priories is restored to them;—the non-election of a grand master:—These circumstances would have been sufficient, without any other special grounds, to have warranted his majesty in suspending the evacuation of the island, until some new arrangement could be adjusted for its security and independence. But when it is considered how greatly the dominion, power, and influence of France have of late been extended, his majesty must feel that he has an incontestible right, conformably to the principles on which the treaty of peace was negociated and concluded, to demand additional securities in any new arrangement which it might be necessary to make, with a view of effecting the real objects of that treaty. And these considerations, sufficient as they might be in themselves, to justify the line of conduct which his majesty had determined to adopt, have received additional force from the views which have been recently and unreservedly manifested by the French government, respecting the Turkish dominions, and the islands in the Adriatic (and which have been in a great degree admitted by the first consul, in his interview with your excellency)—views which are directly repugnant, not only to the spirit, but to the letter of the treaty of Amiens.

From the postscript in your excellency's letter, it appears, that a project was in contemplation, by which, according to the declaration of M. Talleyrand, the integrity of the Turkish territory would be secured so as to do away every cause of doubt or uneasiness, either with regard to Egypt, or to any other part of the Turkish dominions.—His majesty will consider the communication of such a project as indicating a disposition, on the part of the French government, to afford him explanation and satisfaction respecting some of the points which have been the subject of his representations. But, after all that has passed, his majesty cannot consent that his troops should evacuate the island of Malta, until substantial security has been provided for those objects which, under the present circumstances, might be materially endangered by their removal. I am, &c.

HAWKESBURY.

No. 40.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, March 5th, 1803.

My Lord;—I saw M. de Talleyrand yesterday, and acquitted myself of your lordship's instructions. I recapitulated the several arguments therein contained, dwelling particularly on the open avowal of the first consul's views in Egypt; and concluding with the resolution of his majesty not to withdraw his troops from Malta, until some security should be given, that, by so doing, his majesty should not expose the safety of his own dominions.

He heard me with great patience, and, in answer, endeavoured, as before, to convince me that there was no reason whatever for the apprehensions which we entertained.—That it was true, the acquisition of Egypt had been, and, perhaps, still was, a favourite object of the first consul; but that it was not so much so, as to allow him to go to war for its attainment.

I then told him, that what had in a particular manner excited the attention of your lordship, in my last report, was the assurance he had given me of some project being in contemplation, whereby the integrity of the Turkish empire would be so insured, in all its parts, as to remove every doubt or apprehension. I begged him, therefore, to explain himself on this subject, which I conceived to be of the utmost importance, since it was only by such means that both parties could be satisfied. He then gave me to understand, that what he had termed a project was nothing more than what had been expressed in the first consul's message to the legislative body, when he says, that there is a French ambassador at Constantinople, who is charged to give every assurance of the disposition of France to strengthen, instead of to weaken, that government. I expressed a doubt whether this, or any other parole security, would be considered as sufficient in such a transaction. Hereupon he repeated the question—What, then, is the security which you require, and which the first consul can give?—This, I told him, must be the subject of the negotiation on which we were willing to enter; and I trusted that the French government would bring into it the same temper, and the same real desire to conciliate, which was manifested by his majesty's ministers.

M. de Talleyrand now informed me, that the first consul had, five or six days ago, ordered instructions to be sent to general Andreossy, by which he was to require an immediate and categorical answer to the plain

Digitized by Google

question—Whether his majesty would, or would not, cause Malta to be evacuated by the British troops? That he concluded this communication was already made, and that he expected to learn the result of it in a very few days; adding, that all the first consul wanted was, to know precisely on what he had to depend.

I could not help lamenting this precipitate measure, since it could answer no good purpose, and would only tend to introduce into the discussion ill-humour and offended dignity, in the place of dispassionate reasoning. I begged him, however, to be prepared, and to prepare the first consul, to meet with more opposition to his will than he had been accustomed to on similar occasions.

I told him, that his majesty was willing to discuss the point in dispute with fairness and candour, but certainly never would be intimidated into acquiescence; and I repeatedly urged, that, if he wished well to the peace of the two countries, he should prepare the first consul for the consequences which might naturally be expected from this step, and thus prevent the effect of any sudden gust of ill-humour. He was unwilling to admit that there could be any chance of satisfying the first consul short of a compliance with his wishes, founded, as he pretended, on good faith. Our conversation ended here, and I wait the result of general Andreossy's communication with the utmost impatience. I have, &c.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

P. S. In the interval between the writing and the transcribing the above dispatch, I have taken another opportunity of seeing M. de Talleyrand, and I am glad to find, that (for what purpose I know not) he had represented the instructions to general Andreossy as much more absolute and offensive than they really are. I found him to-day entirely disposed to give me another opinion, and to convince me, that the first consul, far from wishing to carry matters to extremity, was desirous to discuss, fairly, and without passion, a point which, he admitted, was of importance to both countries. He repeatedly assured me, that much as the first consul might have the acquisition of Egypt at heart, he would sacrifice his own feelings to the preservation of peace, and henceforth seek to augment his glory, by improving and consolidating the internal situation of the country, rather than by adding to its possessions.

(Signed) W.

No. 41.—Note from General Andreossy to Lord Hawkesbury, dated March 10th, 1803.

The undersigned ambassador and minister plenipotentiary of the French republic to his Britannic majesty, had received from the first consul express orders to require from the British government some explanations respecting the protracted occupation of the island of Malta, by the English troops. He had hoped that verbal communications would have been sufficient to have produced satisfactory expositions, by preparing the way for the mutual conciliation of minds and interests, a conduct which has been prescribed to him by his ardent zeal for the maintenance of harmony between the two countries, and of the peace of Europe, objects of the solicitude of the French government: but the undersigned thinks he can no longer delay complying with the instructions he had received; and he has, therefore, the honour of addressing the following observations to his excellency lord Hawkesbury, which recall to recollection the spirit and the leading features of the verbal communications which he has previously made to him.

By the conditions of the fourth paragraph of the tenth article of the treaty of Amiens, the English troops were to evacuate the island of Malta and its dependencies, three months after the exchange of the ratifications. Ten months have elapsed since the ratifications have been exchanged, and the English troops are still at Malta. The French troops, on the contrary, who were to evacuate the Neapolitan and Papal states, have not waited the expiration of the three months which were granted to them to withdraw, and have quitted Tarentum, the fortifications of which they had re-established, and where they had collected 100 pieces of cannon.

What can be alleged in justification of the delay in evacuating Malta? Has not the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens provided for every thing? and the Neapolitan troops being arrived, under what pretext do those of England still remain there?

It is because all the powers enumerated in the 6th paragraph, have not yet accepted the guarantee which is devolved upon them? But this is not a condition that relates to the evacuation of the island; and besides, Austria has already sent its act of guarantee: Russia, itself, has made only a single difficulty, which is done away by the accession of the first consul to the modifications proposed, unless, indeed, England itself throws obstacles in the way, by refusing to accede to the proposals of Russia, which, after all, could not affect the engagements of his Britannic majesty, who, according to the express conditions of the treaty, is to evacuate the island of Malta within three months, placing it under the guard of the Neapolitans, who are to garrison it until the definitive arrangements of the order are settled.

It should, therefore, seem impossible, and it would be without example in the history of nations, were his Britannic majesty to refuse to execute a fundamental article of the pacification, of the very one, which, in the drawing up of the preliminaries, was considered as the first, and as requiring to be settled previously to every other point.

Indeed, the first consul, who cordially relies

Digitized by Google

on the intentions of his Britannic majesty, and cannot suppose them to be less open and generous than those with which he is animated, has hitherto been unwilling to attribute the delay of the evacuation of the island of Malta to any other than to maritime circumstances.

The undersigned is, therefore, charged to require explanations on this point, and he is persuaded that the British ministry will be the more anxious to furnish such as will be satisfactory, as they must be sensible how necessary they are for the maintenance of harmony, and how important they are for the honour of the two nations.

The undersigned avails himself of this opportunity to renew to lord Hawkesbury the assurances of his high consideration.

(Signed) F. Andreossy.

No. 42.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated March 12th, 1803.

My Lord;—The messenger Mason, arrived yesterday morning early, with your lordship's letter of the 7th, informing me, that, in consequence of the preparations in the ports of France and Holland, which, though avowedly intended for colonial service, might, in the event of a rupture, be turned against some part of the British dominions, his majesty had judged it expedient to send a message to both houses of parliament, recommending, in terms void of offence, the adoption of such measures, as may be consistent with the honour of his crown, and the security of his dominions, and, at the same time, such as will manifest his majesty's disposition for the preservation of peace.

I beg leave to return your lordship my thanks for having apprized me of this circumstance by a special messenger; I found, however, on going to M. de Talleyrand, at two o'clock, that he was already informed of it. He was just setting out to communicate it to the first consul, and appeared under considerable agitation. He returned with me to his cabinet, and though he told me he was pressed for time, he suffered me to relate the circumstance without interruption. I endeavoured to make him sensible that this measure was merely precautionary, and not, in the least degree, intended as a menace. I concluded my observations by repeating that it was merely a measure of self-security, founded on the armaments which were carrying on in the ports of France and Holland, remarking, at the same time, that had not even these armaments been as notorious as they were, the very circumstance of the first consul's determination to augment so considerably his army, in time of peace, would have been a full and sufficient motive for such a measure of precaution.

M. de Talleyrand now informed me that he was already acquainted with the business; that a messenger had that morning arrived, who had brought him a copy of the message, which he communicated to me. I could draw from him no reply whatever to my observations. He confined himself strictly to the assurance which he has so repeatedly made, that there was no foundation whatever for the alarm which was felt by his majesty's ministers; that the first consul was pacific; that he had no thoughts whatever of attacking his majesty's dominions, unless forced to do so by a commencement of hostilities on our part; that he should always consider the refusal to evacuate Malta as such a commencement of hostilities; and that, as we had hitherto hesitated to do so, he was justified in adopting the measures which might eventually be necessary. He disclaimed every idea of the armaments fitting out in the Dutch ports having any other destination than to the colonies; and concluded, that, for his part, he could not comprehend the motives which had necessitated a resort to such a measure on the part of his majesty's government.

He then desired leave to go to the first consul, promising that he would let me know the result when we met at dinner at the Prussian minister's. He did not come there till near seven o'clock, and when we rose from dinner, he took me aside, and informed me, that although the first consul had been highly irritated at the unjust suspicion which his majesty's government entertained, yet, he would not allow himself to be so far mastered by his feelings, as to lose sight of the calamities which the present discussion might entail upon humanity. He dwelt much on this topic, and explained the measures to which he should be obliged to resort: he said, that if England wished to discuss fairly, he wished the same; that if England prepared for war, he would do the same; and that if England should finally determine on hostilities, he trusted to the support of the French nation in the cause of honour and of justice. It was in vain that I repeated that England did not wish for war; that peace was as necessary to us as it could be to France; that all we desired, and all that we were contending for, was security; that every thing proved to us that that security was threatened by the first consul's views on Egypt; and that, consequently, our refusal to evacuate Malta was become as much a necessary measure of precaution, as the defence of any part of his majesty's dominions. To this kind of reasoning M. de Talleyrand opposed the moderation of the first consul, his great self-denial, and his determination to sacrifice even the most favourite points to his sincere desire to avoid a rupture.

M. de Talleyrand now told me, that, in order to facilitate my communication of the first consul's sentiments, he would communicate to me a paper which he had that morning drawn up with him; that it was not to be considered as any thing absolutely official;

Digitized by Google

that it was a memorandum to assist me, but such as I might, if I chose, transmit to your lordship. I now enclose it. I have, &c.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

[Note Verbale referred to in No. 42.]

1. If his Britannic majesty, in his message, means to speak of the expedition of Helvoetsluys, all the world knows that it was destined for America, and that it was on the point of sailing for its destination, but in consequence of his majesty's message, the embarkation and putting to sea are about to be counter-manded.

2. If we do not receive satisfactory explanation respecting these armaments in England, and if they actually take place, *it is natural* that the first consul should march 20,000 men into Holland, since Holland is mentioned in the message.

3. These troops being once in the country, *it is natural* that an encampment should be formed on the frontiers of Hanover; and, moreover, that additional bodies should join those troops which were already embarked for America, in order to form new embarkations, and to maintain an offensive and defensive position.

4. *It is natural* that the first consul should order several camps to be formed at Calais, and on different points of the coasts.

5. It is likewise *in the nature of things* that the first consul, who was on the point of evacuating Switzerland, should be under the necessity of continuing a French army in that country.

6. It is also *the natural consequence of all this*, that the first consul should send a fresh force into Italy, in order to occupy, in case of necessity, the position of Tarentum.

7. England, arming, and arming with so much publicity, will compel France to put her armies on the war establishment, a step so important, as cannot fail to agitate all Europe.

The result of all these movements will be to irritate the two countries still more. France will have been compelled to take all these precautions in consequence of the English armaments, and nevertheless, every means will be taken to excite the English nation, by the assertion that France meditates an invasion. The whole British population will be obliged to put themselves under arms for their defence, and their export trade will, even before the war, be in a state of stagnation throughout the whole extent of the countries occupied by the French arms. The experience of nations, and the course of events, prove, that the distance between such a state of things and actual hostility, is unfortunately not remote. As to the differences, of which mention is made in his Britannic majesty's message, we know not of any that we have with England; for it cannot be imagined, that a serious intention can have existed in England, of evading the execution of the treaty of Amiens, under the protection of a military armament. Europe well knows that it is possible to attempt the dismemberment of France, but not to intimidate her.

No. 43.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, March 14th, 1803.

My Lord;—The messenger, Mason, went on Saturday with my dispatches of that date, and, until yesterday, Sunday, I saw no one, likely to give me any farther information, such as I could depend upon, as to the effect which his majesty's message had produced on the first consul. At the court which was held at the Thuilleries upon that day, he accosted me, evidently under very considerable agitation. He began by asking me if I had any news from England. I told him that I had received letters from your lordship two days ago. He immediately said, and so you are determined to go to war. No! I replied, we are too sensible of the advantages of peace—Nous avons, said he, déjà fait la guerre pendant quinze ans.—As he seemed to wait for an answer, I observed only, c'en est déjà trop.—Mais, said he, vous voulez la faire encore quinze annés, et vous m'y forçez.—I told him, that was very far from his majesty's intentions.—He then proceeded to count Marcow and the chevalier Azara, who were standing together, at a little distance from me, and said to them, les Anglois veulent la guerre, mais s'ils sont les premiers à tirer l'epée, je serai le dernier à la remettre. Ils ne respectant pas les traités, il faut dorénavant les couvrir de crepe noir.—He then went his round. In a few minutes he came back to me, and resumed the conversation, if such it can be called, by something personally civil to me. He began again—Porquoi des armémens? Contre qui des mesures de précaution? Je n'ai pas un seul vaisseau de ligne dans les ports de France; mais si vous voulez armer, j'armerai aussi; si vous voulez vous battre, je me battrai aussi. Vous pourrez peut-etre tuer la France, mais jamais l'intimider.—On voudroit, said I, ni l'un ni l'autre. On voudroit vivre en bonne intelligence avec elle.—Il faut donc respecter les traites, replied he; malheur à ceux qui ne respectent pas les traités; ils en seront responsable à toute l'Europe.—He was too much agitated to make it adviseable for me to prolong the conversation; I therefore made no answer, and he retired to his apartment, repeating the last phrase.

It is to be remarked, that all this passed loud enough to be overheard by two hundred people who were present, and I am persuaded that there was not a single person, who did not feel the extreme impropriety of his conduct, and the total want of dignity as well as of decency on the occasion. I propose taking the first opportunity of speaking to M. Talleyrand on this subject. I have, &c.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

Digitized by Google

No. 44.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, dated March 15th, 1803.

I send your excellency a copy of the note presented to me by general Andreossy on the 10th instant, and a copy of the answer which I have, this day, by his majesty's commands, returned to it.

No. 45.—Note from Lord Hawkesbury to General Andreossy, dated March 15th, 1803.

The undersigned, his majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, has laid before the king the note of his excellency the French ambassador of the 10th instant.

In obeying the commands of his majesty, by returning an official answer to this note, the undersigned feels it necessary for him to do little more than repeat the explanations which have been already given, on more than one occasion, by himself verbally to general Andreossy, and by lord Whitworth to M. Talleyrand, on the subject of the note, and of the points which appear to be connected with it. He can have no difficulty in assuring the French ambassador, that his majesty has entertained a most sincere desire that the treaty of Amiens might be executed in a full and complete manner; but it has not been possible for him to consider this treaty as having been founded on principles different from those which have been invariably applied to every other antecedent treaty or convention, namely, that they were negociated with reference to the actual *state of possession* of the different parties, and to the *treaties* or *public engagements* by which they were bound at the time of its conclusion; and that if that state of possession and of engagements was so materially altered by the act of either of the parties as to affect the nature of the compact itself, the other party has a right, according to the law of nations, to interfere for the purpose of obtaining satisfaction or compensation for any essential difference which such acts may have subsequently made in their relative situation; that if there ever was a case to which this principle might be applied with peculiar propriety, it was that of the late treaty of peace: for the negotiation was conducted on a basis not merely proposed by his majesty, but specially agreed to, in an official note, by the French government, namely, *That his majesty should keep a compensation out of his conquests for the important acquisition of territory made by France upon the continent.* That is a sufficient proof that the compact was understood to have been concluded in relation to the then existing state of things; for the measure of his majesty's compensation was to be calculated with reference to the acquisitions of France at that time; and if the interference of the French government in the general affairs of Europe since that period; if their interposition with respect to Switzerland and Holland, whose independence was guaranteed by them at the time of the conclusion of the treaty of peace; if the acquisitions which have been made by France in various quarters, but particularly those in Italy, have extended the territory and increased the power of France, his majesty would be warranted, consistently with the spirit of the treaty of peace, in claiming equivalents for these acquisitions, as a counterpoise to the augmentation of the power of France. His majesty, however, anxious to prevent all ground of misunderstanding, and desirous of consolidating the general peace of Europe, as far as might be in his power, was willing to have waved the pretensions he might have a right to advance of this nature; and as the other articles of the definitive treaty have been in a course of execution on his part, so he would have been ready to have carried into effect an arrangement conformable to the true intent and spirit of the tenth article; the execution of that arrangement, according to its terms, having been rendered impracticable by circumstances which it was not in his majesty's power to control. Whilst his majesty was actuated by these sentiments of moderation and forbearance, and prepared to regulate his conduct in conformity to them, his attention was particularly attracted by the very extraordinary publication of the report of colonel Sebastiani to the first consul. This report contains the most unjustifiable insinuations and charges against his majesty's government; against the officer commanding his forces in Egypt, and against the British army in that quarter: insinuations and charges wholly destitute of foundation, and such as would have warranted his majesty in demanding that satisfaction which, on occasions of this nature, independent powers, in a state of amity, have a right to expect from each other. It discloses, moreover, views in the highest degree injurious to the interests of his majesty's dominions, and directly repugnant to, and utterly inconsistent with, the spirit and letter of the treaty of peace concluded between his majesty and the French government. His majesty's ambassador at Paris was accordingly directed to make such a representation to the French government as his majesty felt to be called for by imputations of the nature above described, by the disclosure of purposes inconsistent with good faith, and highly injurious to the interests of his people; and as a claim had recently been made by the French government on the subject of the evacuation of Malta, lord Whitworth was instructed to accompany this representation by a declaration on the part of his majesty, that before he could enter into any farther discussions relative to that island, it was expected that satisfactory explanations should be given upon the various points respecting which his majesty had complained. This representation and this claim, founded on principles incon-

Digitized by Google

testibly just, and couched in terms the most temperate, appear to have been wholly disregarded by the French government; no satisfaction has been afforded, no explanation whatever has been given; but, on the contrary, his majesty's suspicions of the views of the French government with respect to the Turkish empire have been confirmed and strengthened by subsequent events. Under these circumstances his majesty feels that he has no alternative, and that a just regard to his own honour, and to the interests of his people, makes it necessary for him to declare, that he cannot consent that his troops should evacuate the island of Malta, until substantial security has been provided for those objects which, under the present circumstances, might be materially endangered by their removal.

With respect to several of the positions stated in the note, and grounded on the idea of the tenth article being executed in its literal sense, they call for some observations. By the tenth article of the treaty of Amiens, the island of Malta was to be restored, by his majesty, to the order of St. John, upon certain conditions. The evacuation of the island, at a specified period, formed a part of these conditions; and if the other stipulations had been in a due course of execution, his majesty would have been bound, by the terms of the treaty, to have ordered his forces to evacuate the island; but these conditions must be considered as being all of equal effect; and if any material parts of them should have been found incapable of execution, or if the execution of them should, from any circumstances, have been retarded, his majesty would be warranted in deferring the evacuation of the island until such time as the other conditions of the article could be effected; or until some new arrangement could be concluded, which should be judged satisfactory by the contracting parties. The refusal of Russia to accede to the arrangement, except on condition that the Maltese langue should be abolished; the silence of the court of Berlin, with respect to the invitation that has been made to it, in consequence of the treaty, to become a guaranteeing power; the abolition of the Spanish priories, in defiance of the treaty to which the king of Spain was a party; the declaration of the Portuguese government, of their intention to sequestrate the property of the Portuguese priory, as forming a part of the Spanish langue, unless the property of the Spanish priories was restored to them:—these circumstances would have been sufficient, without any other special grounds, to have warranted his majesty in suspending the evacuation of the island. The evacuation of Tarentum and Brundusium is, in no respect, connected with that of Malta. The French government were bound to evacuate the kingdom of Naples by their treaty of peace with the king of Naples, at a period antecedent to that at which this stipulation was carried into effect.

The French government were bound, likewise, by engagements with the emperor of Russia, to respect the independence of the kingdom of Naples; but even admitting that the departure of the French troops from Tarentum depended solely on the article of the treaty of Amiens, their departure is, by the terms of the treaty, to take place at the same period as the other evacuations in Europe, namely, one month after the ratification of the definitive treaty; at which period both Porto Ferrajo and Minorca were evacuated by his majesty's forces; whereas the troops of his majesty were, in no case, bound to evacuate the island of Malta, antecedent to the period of three months after the ratification of the definitive treaty; and, even in that event, it must be considered as depending upon the other parts of the arrangement being in a course of execution. With respect to the assertion in the note, that the Neapolitan troops were to form the garrison of Malta, until the period when the arrangements relative to the order could be carried into effect, it will appear, by a reference to the article, that, by the preliminary paragraph, the island was to be restored to the order upon the condition of the succeeding stipulations, and that it was only from the period when the restitution to the order had actually taken place, that, by the 12th paragraph, the Neapolitan troops were to form a part of the garrison.

The undersigned has thus stated, with all the frankness which the importance of the subject appears to require, the sentiments of his majesty on the note delivered to him by general Andreossy, and on the points in discussion between the two countries.

His majesty is willing to indulge the hope, that the conduct of the French government on this occasion may be influenced by principles similar to those which have invariably influenced his own. That, as far as possible, all causes of distrust, and every impediment to a good understanding between the two countries, may be completely and effectually removed, and that the peace may be consolidated on a secure and lasting foundation.

The undersigned, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 46.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, March 17th, 1803.

My Lord;—I called yesterday on M. de Talleyrand, to converse with him on the subject of what had passed on Sunday last at the Thuilleries. He had been, since that day, so fully occupied with his expeditions to different foreign courts, that I had no opportunity of seeing him sooner. I told him, that I had been placed by the first consul in a situation which could neither suit my public nor my private feelings. That I went to the Thuilleries to pay my respects to the first consul, and to present my countrymen, but not to

Digitized by Google

treat of political subjects; and that unless I had the assurance from him that I should not be exposed to a repetition of the same disagreeable circumstances, I should be under the necessity of discontinuing my visits to the Thuilleries. M. de Talleyrand assured me, that it was very far from the first consul's intention to distress me; but he had felt himself personally insulted by the charges which were brought against him by the English government; *and that it was incumbent upon him to take the first opportunity of exculpating himself in the presence of the ministers of the different powers of Europe.* He assured me that nothing similar would occur.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

No. 47.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, March 18th, 1803.

My Lord;—I received your lordship's dispatch, with its inclosure, this morning early; and I learnt at the same time that a messenger had arrived from general Andreossy to M. de Talleyrand; shortly after, M. de Talleyrand sent to desire I would call upon him, which I accordingly did. He told me that he had not only received your lordship's note to the French ambassador, but also the sentiments of the first consul upon it, which he was desirous to communicate to me, before he redispatched the messenger. This he did, and I refer your lordship to the communication which general Andreossy will make, according to his instructions, without loss of time.

From the tenor of this note, it appears, that this government is not desirous to proceed to extremities; that is to say, it is not prepared so to do; and therefore, it expresses a willingness to enter on the discussion of the point, which appears, according to their conception, or rather to the interpretation they choose to give to it, the most material. This, of course, is the safety of Egypt. On this the first consul declares in the note, as M. Talleyrand did repeatedly to me, that he would be willing to enter into any engagement, by which such a security as would fully quiet our apprehensions, might be given on the part of the French government. On the subject of Malta, the first consul maintains that he cannot listen to any compromise; with regard to Egypt, he is willing to enter into any engagement which may be thought sufficient.

I told him that he had departed from the letter and the sense of your lordship's note, by confining the question to Malta alone. That note had comprehended other most important considerations. That the best method of bringing the discussion to a speedy conclusion, such as his majesty's government appeared to wish, was, to take it up on a broader scale. But that, at the same time, his majesty's government would not refuse to lend itself to any thing reasonable which might be suggested. There was, however, I told him, one distinction to be made in the situation of the two governments, in the discussion of this question. By our possession of Malta, France was not threatened; but the reverse was the case, should the access to Egypt be opened by its evacuation. I have, &c.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

No. 48.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, dated March 27th, 1803.

My Lord;—Your excellency's several dispatches, to No. 26 inclusive, have been received and laid before the king. With respect to the subject of your excellency's dispatch of March 14th, I have it in command to signify to you his majesty's pleasure, that you take the earliest opportunity to represent to Monsieur de Talleyrand, the surprise with which his majesty has learnt the conduct which the first consul had observed towards your excellency in the instance to which that dispatch refers; and you will add, that as his majesty has a right to expect that his ambassador should be treated with the respect and attention due to the dignity of the sovereign whom he represents, it will be impossible for you to present yourself, on any days of ceremony, to the first consul, unless you receive an assurance that you will never be exposed to a repetition of the treatment which you experienced on the occasion. Although your excellency appears to have anticipated this instruction in one of your most recent conversations with Monsieur de Talleyrand, I, nevertheless, think it right to enable your excellency to state to that minister, the sense which the king entertains of this transaction. I am, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 49.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, dated April 3rd, 1803.

My Lord;—I enclose to your excellency, for your information, copies of the official note delivered to me on the 29th ultimo, by general Andreossy, and of the answer which, by his majesty's command, I this day returned to that communication. I have, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

[Inclosure in No. 49.]

The undersigned general of division, ambassador and minister plenipotentiary from the French republic, has laid before his government the note addressed to him by his excellency lord Hawkesbury. He has received orders to make the following answer to the observations therein contained.

The object of this note appears to be to explain his Britannic majesty's message; and to give some elucidations which had been demanded respecting the execution of the treaty of Amiens.

The first consul will not make any complaint relative to the extraordinary and unexpected assertions of this act, issued by his Britannic majesty. Not one of them is founded.

†

Digitized by Google

His Britannic majesty believes that his kingdom is menaced by preparations made in the ports of Holland and France. He has been deceived; the first consul has made no preparation.

There were, at the time of the message, but two frigates in the roads of Holland, and but three corvettes in the roads of Dunkirk.

How can his Britannic majesty's ministers have been deceived on facts so evident? His Britannic majesty's ambassadors at Paris, and at the Hague, have seriously to reproach themselves, if they have credited information so evidently false, and if they did not foresee that they thereby exposed their government to err in the most important deliberations.

Was it not conformable to the usage practised among nations, first to demand explanations, and thus to take means for being convinced of the falsehood of the intelligence which the ministers might have received? Must not the least effects of the omission of this practice be, to bring on the ruin of families, and carry confusion, uncertainty, and disorder, into all the commercial affairs of both nations? The first consul knows, both from his own sentiments, and judging of other people by the French, that a great nation can never be terrified. He believes that good policy and the feelings of true dignity, ever inspire the sentiment of esteem for a rival nation, and never the design of menacing her. A great nation may be destroyed, but not intimidated.

The second part of his majesty's message consists of another assertion, no better founded. His Britannic majesty makes mention of discussions, the success of which is doubtful. What are these discussions? What official notes, what protocol prove the opening, the progress, the vicissitudes of a debate? Can a state of difficulties, which leads to an alternative of peace or war, spring up unawares, without commencement, without progression, and lead without distinction to an appeal to arms, before all the means of conciliation have been exhausted.

In this case, the appeal has been publicly made before it could be known that there was room for misunderstanding. The termination of the discussions were announced before they had begun. The issue of a difficult discussion has been declared before it arose. What would Europe, what would both nations think, if they knew that these discussions, announced by his Britannic majesty as so difficult to terminate, were unknown to the French government; and that the first consul, on reading the message, could not comprehend the meaning of either of the declarations therein contained.

He has also abstained from any ostensible step; and whatever may have been the clamour, the activity, the provocations of war, which have taken place in England since that message, he has given no orders, he has made no dispositions, no preparations. He places his glory, in an affair of this nature, wholly in being taken in an unprovided state. He will continue in this system of honest frankness, until his Britannic majesty has reflected fully on the part he proposes to take.

In lord Hawkesbury's note, an opinion is expressed, that the French republic has increased in power since the peace of Amiens. This is a decided error. Since that epoch, France has evacuated a considerable territory. The French power has received no degree of augmentation. If his Britannic majesty is determined to make war, he may allege all the pretexts he pleases. He will find few less founded.

As to the complaints made respecting the publications which may have appeared in France, they are of an order too secondary to be capable of influencing such a decision. Are we then returned to the age of tournaments? Motives of this nature might have authorized, four centuries ago, the combat of thirties; but they cannot, in this age, be a reason for war between the two countries.

It might suffice in this respect to reply to his excellency, that no representation has been made by him on the subject to the government of the republic; and that, if it was but justice to grant satisfaction, the first consul had a right to expect that which was required by M. Otto, in his note of the 22nd Thermidor last, upon grounds more serious and more just.

Is it possible that the English ministry can have been ignorant, that, ever since the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens, the English press has not ceased to spread through Europe the rage of war, the discredit of peace, and shameless and boundless outrages against every thing which is the object of the love and veneration of the French people?

A few days after the ratification of peace, one of his Britannic majesty's ministers declared, that the peace establishment must be considerable; and the distrust excited by this declaration, made in parliament with as much bitterness as impropriety, furnished a commentary for the exaggeration and alarms which were circulated in despicable pamphlets, and in newspapers, as contemptible as those libels. Since that time, these writers have found themselves invariably supported in their insolent observations by particular phrases taken from the speeches of some leading members of parliament. These speeches, scarcely to be exceeded by the newswriters themselves, have, for these eighteen months, tended to encourage insult against other governments to that degree, that every European must be offended, every reasonable Englishman must be humiliated, by such unheard-of licentiousness.

What, if we connect with these sallies, proceedings more offensive and serious; the indulgence granted to French criminals, publishing daily outrages in the French language; the still more inexcusable toleration extended

Digitized by Google

to villains covered with crimes, and plotting assassinations incessantly, such as Georges, who still continues to reside at London, protected, and having a considerable establishment; in a word, the little justice which has been shown to all our representations—how are we to account for the publicity of the complaint which his Britannic majesty has thought proper to make respecting some indefinite wrongs which he has hitherto thought unnecessary to bring before the first consul?

The first consul has had cause to be convinced that all his representations on all these points were useless, and that his Britannic majesty, regardless of the neighbouring powers, was resolved to authorise every thing within his dominions; but he did not, on that account, entertain a doubt of the continuance of peace, nor alarm Europe with the notification of war. He confined himself to this principle of conduct, to permit or to prevent in France, with respect to England, whatever should be permitted or prevented in England with regard to France.

He has, however, expressed, and he again expresses his wish, that means should be adopted to prevent, in future, any mention being made of what is passing in England, *either in the official discussions, or in the polemical writings in* France, *as in like manner in the French official discussions and polemical writings, no mention whatever should be made of what is passing in England.*

Lord Hawkesbury mentions an article in a newspaper, containing the report of a French colonel. In serious discussions, an answer on this point might be dispensed with; but it is neither a long nor difficult matter.

A colonel in the English army has published a work, in England, filled with the most atrocious and disgusting calumnies against the French army and its general. The lies it contains have been contradicted by the reception which colonel Sebastiani experienced. The publicity of his report was at once a refutation and a reparation which the French army had a right to expect. On his arrival in Egypt, this officer, to his great astonishment, found the English army there, although they should have evacuated it, and the Turks prodigiously alarmed at the continuance of the English army, and at its relations with the natives, in rebellion and open revolt against the Sublime Porte.

He must have conceived that the treaties which connect us with the Porte, and by which we have guaranteed to it the integrity of its possessions, compelled us to unite ourselves with that power. It was natural to think that England meant to declare war from the instant she refused to execute the articles of the treaty. For, after all, France is not reduced to such a state of debasement, as to suffer treaties made with her to be executed or not at pleasure.

Hence the researches made by this officer, as to the forces which were in Egypt, and as to the position occupied by the English army.

But Egypt has since been restored to the dominion of its lawful sovereign, and the idea of a rupture between the two nations, on account of the engagement contracted with the Porte, no longer exists.

There remains, therefore, but one object worthy of fixing the attention of the two nations. The execution of the treaty of Amiens, as far as concerns Malta. His majesty has engaged to restore it to the order, and to entrust it to the Neapolitan army till the order should be in a condition to guard it. His majesty will reject all sophistry, every distinction, every mental reservation which might be offered to him, to put in doubt the force and the validity of his engagement. His Britannic majesty's equity, his conscience in this respect, are guarantees for the French republic. Were it otherwise, what means in future would the two nations have for coming to an understanding? Would not all be chaos? This would, indeed, be adding another calamity to those which have menaced social order.

The undersigned is directed to declare, in short, that the first consul will not take up the defiance of war given by England to France; that as to Malta, he sees no subject for discussion, the treaty having provided for every thing, and settled every thing. The undersigned, &c.

(Signed) F. Andreossy.

[Inclosure in No. 49.]

The undersigned, his majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, has laid before the king the note of his excellency general Andreossy, of the 29th of last month.

His majesty has been induced, by that spirit of moderation and forbearance which have invariably governed his conduct in every part of his communications with the French government, to abstain from making many observations which the perusal of this note may naturally have suggested to his mind.

His majesty has perceived, with great regret, that the French government continue to withhold all satisfaction and explanation on the points on which he has complained; and that, at the time when they evade all discussion on the subject of his representations, they persist in their requisition that the island of Malta should be forthwith evacuated by his forces.

His majesty can never so far forget what is due to himself and to his people, as to acquiesce in such a course of proceeding; he has, therefore, judged it expedient to give instructions to his ambassador, at Paris, to ascertain, distinctly, from the French government, whether they are determined to persevere in withholding all satisfaction and explation on the points on which his majesty has complained; or whether they are disposed, without delay, to give such satisfaction and explanations upon the present state of affairs,

Digitized by Google

as may lead to an arrangement which may be calculated to adjust the differences at present subsisting between the two governments. It is his majesty's anxious desire that, by this mode of proceeding, an end may be put to that state of suspense and irritation which must be so injurious to the interests of both countries; and that the two governments, actuated by the same principles of justice and moderation, may be led to concur in such measures as are most likely to conduce to their permanent tranquillity. The undersigned, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 50.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, dated April 4th, 1803.

My Lord;—It is become essential, that the discussions which have been for some time subsisting between his majesty and the French government, should be brought to an issue within as short a time as is consistent with the deliberation which must be given to objects of so much importance.

The last note presented by general Andreossy, in the name of his government, in answer to my note of the 15th of last month, evades all explanation, and even all discussion, of the points on which complaint has been made by his majesty.

If the French government should seriously intend to persist in this course of proceeding there can be no hopes of a successful termination to the present negotiation. It is important, therefore, that you should ascertain distinctly, in the first instance, whether they are disposed to enter into explanation on the points on which his majesty has complained, and to come to such an arrangement as may be calculated to adjust the differences at present subsisting between the two countries; and for this purpose you will present a note to the effect of that which is herewith inclosed. It is possible that the French government may continue to evade all discussion on the points in question, and confine themselves to a categorical demand, that Malta should be immediately evacuated. In that case, it is his majesty's pleasure, that you should declare the impossibility of the relations of amity continuing to subsist between the two countries, and the necessity you will be under of leaving Paris within a certain time. But if, on the other hand, they should show a readiness to enter into discussion, and to give reasonable satisfaction and explanation, it is important that you should be informed, without loss of time, of the sentiments of his majesty's government, as to what might be considered an equitable adjustment of the differences between the two governments at this moment.

I have, therefore, by his majesty's command, inclosed the project of an arrangement, which, under the present circumstances, would meet the ideas of his majesty's government; which would afford security for those objects which are considered as endangered by the unequivocal disclosure of the views of the first consul, and which, at the same time, might entirely save the honour of the French government. I am, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

[First Inclosure referred to in No. 50.]

The undersigned, his Britannic majesty's ambassador extraordinary, has received the orders of his court to make the following communication to the French government.

His majesty has perceived, with great regret, that the French government continue to withhold all satisfaction and explanation on the points on which he has complained, and that at the time when they evade all discussion on the subject of his representations, they persist in their requisition that the island of Malta should be forthwith evacuated by his forces. His majesty can never so far forget what is due to himself, and to his people, as to acquiesce in such a course of proceeding. He has, therefore, commanded the undersigned to ascertain, distinctly, from the French government, whether they are determined to persevere in withholding all satisfaction and explanation upon the points on which his majesty has complained, or whether they are disposed, without delay, to give such satisfaction and explanation upon the present state of affairs, as may lead to an arrangement which may be calculated to adjust the differences at present subsisting between the two governments.

It is his majesty's anxious desire, that, by adopting this mode of proceeding, an end may be put to that state of suspense and uncertainty which must be so injurious to the interests of both countries; and that the two governments, actuated by the same principles of justice and moderation, may be led to concur in such measures as are most likely to conduce to their permanent tranquillity.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

[Second Inclosure referred to in No. 50.]

Heads of an arrangement to be concluded by treaty or convention between his Majesty and the French government.

Malta to remain in perpetuity in the possession of his majesty. The knights of the order of St. John to be indemnified by his majesty for any losses of property which they may sustain in consequence of such an arrangement.—Holland and Switzerland to be evacuated by the French troops.—The island of Elba to be confirmed by his majesty to France, and the king of Etruria to be acknowledged.—The Italian and Ligurian republics to be acknowledged by his majesty, provided an arrangement is made in Italy for the king of Sardinia, which shall be satisfactory to him.

Digitized by Google

No. 51.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, April 7th, 1803.

I received your lordship's dispatches of the 4th instant, by the messenger Wagstaff, with their inclosures, yesterday evening; and shall, probably, in the course of the day, have an opportunity of communicating to M. de Talleyrand the note, which I shall translate for that purpose.

No. 52.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated April 7th, 1803.

My Lord;—Since writing the preceding dispatch, I have seen M. de Talleyrand, and communicated to him the inclosed note, which I trust your lordship will find as close a translation as possible, of that which I received from your lordship. He read it over with much attention, and when he had done, he appeared to be in expectation of some other communication. Upon desiring he would explain himself, he said, that he was in hopes I should have furnished him with the heads of those points, on which it was affirmed, in the note, that the French government had so repeatedly refused all explanation and satisfaction. I told him that it would have been entirely useless to repeat what had been so often urged in vain; that he could not but know, that the explanation required referred to the conduct of the French government, and the system of aggrandizement which it had constantly pursued since the conclusion, and in direct violation of the treaty of Amiens, founded, as it indisputably was, on the state of possession of the two countries at the time; that, with regard to the satisfaction, it evidently referred to the unjustifiable insinuations and charges against his majesty's government, against the officer commanding his forces in Egypt, and against the British army in that quarter, contained in the official report of colonel Sebastiani. He was, by no means disposed to admit, that either of these cases could justify the assertion of the French government having refused explanation and satisfaction, on the ground that no notice had been taken of these transactions, but in a very cursory manner; nor had any explanation ever been required as to any particular transaction, whether in Italy or elsewhere, and if it had, it would immediately have been given; and that the language of col. Sebastiani was not to be put in any comparison with that used by major Wilson, in his account of the campaign of Egypt. I urged the difference of a common publication like that to which he alluded, and a report to the first consul published by him in his official paper. On this occasion, M. de Talleyrand was disposed to call in question the authenticity of the Moniteur. In short, the most ungrounded assertions were substituted for arguments; and, amongst these, I cannot but place that, so often repeated, of the first consul's having entirely given up all idea whatever of Egypt, consequently, we could have no pretext for retaining Malta. He assured me, for the rest, that we could communicate it this evening to the first consul, and that, to-morrow, he should, in all probability, have a communication to make in return. I have, &c.

WHITWORTH.

[Inclosure referred to in No. 52.]

Le soussigné, ambassadeur extraordinaire et plenipotentiare de sa majesté Britannique, a reçu ordre de sa cour de communiquer ce qui suit au gouvernement de France.

Sa majesté a vû à regret que le gouvernement de France continue à refuser toute satisfaction et toute explication sur les objets dont elle à se plaindre, et qu'en évitant toute discussion de ce qui fait le sujet de ses representations il persiste néanmoins à demander l'evacuation de l'isle de Malthe par les forces de sa majesté. Sa majesté sait trop ce qu'elle se doit à elle-même et à son peuple pour acquiescer à de pareils procédés. En conséquence elle a ordonné au soussigné de savoir distinctemente du gouvernment de France, s'il est déterminé à perseverer dans son refus de toute satisfaction et de toute explication sur les objets de plainte de sa majesté, ou bien s'il est disposé à donner sans delai cette satisfaction et cette explication sur l'état actuel des affaires de manière à pouvoir conduire à un arrangement qui seroit de nature à ajuster les differens qui actuellement existent entre les deux gouvernmens.

Sa majesté desire sincèrement l'adoption de ce moyen que mettroit fin à un état de suspension et d'incertitude si nuisible à l'interét des deux nations, et devoir que les deux gouvernemens agissans par les mêmes principes de justice et de moderation puissent s'entendre pour concourir aux mesures le plus susceptibles de leur assurer une tranquillité permanente. Le soussigné, &c.

WHITWORTH.

No. 53.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated April 9th, 1803.

My Lord;—In my conversation yesterday evening with M. de Talleyrand, I found him, after he had seen the first consul, more disposed to contest the substance of the note which I had presented the day before, than to afford any farther explanation. He said, that, in order to proceed regularly, it would be necessary that the French government should be informed, precisely what were the objects which had created such uneasiness, and on which it was alleged all explanation had been refused. That, although this had, perhaps, been touched upon in general conversation, yet no specific charge had been adduced, in such a manner as to demand a formal explanation. I told him, that if the object of the French government was to protract the present state of suspense and uncertainty, that object might be answered to the extent, indeed, of a

Digitized by Google

very few days, by forcing me to such a reference; but I must, at the same time declare to him, that it could be productive of no advantage, and would serve only to provoke such a recapitulation of the system and conduct which France had pursued since the treaty of Amiens, as would have all the appearance of a manifesto, every item of which would carry conviction to every individual in Europe; that it appeared, therefore, more likely to answer the end which both parties proposed, that of hastening the conclusion of an amicable arrangement, to take up the business on the basis which I should propose, and by which they would admit no more than what was incontrovertible, namely, that if the French government exercised a right of extending its influence and territory, in violation of the spirit of the treaty of Amiens, Great Britain had, if she chose to avail herself of it (which I was confident she would not do, further than was necessary as a measure of security), an undoubted right to seek a counterpoise. He did not seem inclined to dispute this position, but rather to admit that such a right did exist, and might be claimed in consequence of the acquisitions which had been made by France. On the point of satisfaction, I found him much more obstinate. He said that the first consul was hurt at the expression (satisfaction), to which he gave an interpretation I had never understood belonged to it, as implying superiority; so that if the British government required satisfaction of the French, it arrogated to itself a superiority. I told him, what certainly must be understood by every one, that the demand of satisfaction, implied that one party had been offended by another, and, of course, had a right to demand such satisfaction; that an inferior had an equal right with his superior to demand it; but, in the case in question, there was perfect equality, and, consequently, there was no offence to be found, but in the conduct which rendered such an appeal necessary. The discussion of this point took up a considerable time, without producing any thing decisive.

We, at last came to the main point of the business; and on this I cannot say any real progress has been made. M. de Talleyrand repeated to me that the first consul had nothing more at heart, than to avoid the necessity of going to war, and that there was no sacrifice he would not make, short of his honour, to obtain this end. Is there, said M. de Talleyrand, no means of satisfying both parties? for, at the same time that the first consul insists, and will always insist, on the full execution of the treaty, he will not object to any mode by which you may acquire the security you think so necessary. You are not satisfied with the independence of Neapolitan troops; what others will answer the purpose? he then started the idea of a mixed garrison, composed of English, French, Italians, Germans, &c. He begged that I would refer once more to your lordship, and submit the inclosed paper, which he drew up in my presence. I told him that we were only losing time by such a reference; that my instructions were positive, and had certainly not been sent me without the fullest consideration. I could not, however, refuse what he so earnestly required; and your lordship will see by the paper, how the matter rests after this conference. I will confess to your lordship, that my motive for consenting to forward this sort of proposal is, that supposing we should find the first consul as obstinate as he now appears to be, on the point of abandoning Malta to us in perpetuity, and that a temporary possession might be considered as the next best thing, something of this kind might derive from it. I have &c.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

[Inclosure referred to in No. 53.]

The conversation with M. Talleyrand to-day has led us to this result. Every thing which may tend to violate the independence of the order of Malta, will never be consented to by the French government. Every thing which may tend to put an end to the present difficulties, or be agreeable to the English government, and which shall not be contrary to the treaty of Amiens, the French government have no objection to make a particular convention respecting it. The motives of this convention shall be inserted in the preamble, and shall relate to the respective grievances concerning which the two governments shall think it adviseable to come to an understanding with each other.

No. 54.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated April 14th, 1803.

Since my last, the negotiation is at a stand, in the expectation, I suppose, of the answer which may arrive, to the overture which I communicated to your lordship on the 9th instant, and which is expected here to produce a good effect, notwithstanding the little hope I have given. To-morrow I shall, in all probability, be in possession of this answer from your lordship, and be enabled to speak still more positively.

No. 55.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, dated April 13th, 1803.

My Lord;—His majesty has received from his charge d'affaires at Hamburgh, the most extraordinary account of the conduct of Monsieur Rheinhardt, the French minister at that place, with respect to a most gross and unwarrantable libel upon his majesty's government. He has been assured that the French minister, having proposed the insertion of that libel in the official gazette of the town of Hamburgh, and the insertion it of having, in the first instance, been refused, the French minister went so far as to demand, in his official capacity, the insertion of that article by order of the senate. His majesty is un-

Digitized by Google

willing to believe that the French government could have authorized so outrageous an attack upon his majesty and his government, and so daring a violation of the independence of a neutral state. It is his majesty's pleasure that you should communicate these circumstances to the French government, and state, at the same time, the impossibility of bringing the present discussions to an amicable conclusion, unless some satisfaction shall be given to his majesty for the indignity which has thus been offered to him, in the face of all Europe, by the French minister at Hamburgh. I have, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 56.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, dated April 13th, 1803.

My Lord;—Your excellency's dispatches have been received, and laid before the king. His majesty has observed, with great satisfaction, the admission by the French government of the justice of his claim to some compensation, in consequence of the increased power and influence of France, since the period of the conclusion of the definitive treaty.

Although, under the circumstances of your conversation with M. Talleyrand, and particularly after the note verbale which he gave to you, it might have been expedient that you should have deferred presenting the project contained in my dispatch, No. 7, in the form of a project, it is desirable that you should communicate without delay, in some mode or other, the contents of that project, for the purpose of ascertaining, distinctly, whether the conditions are such as to induce the French government to give way upon the question of Malta. These conditions appear to his majesty so well calculated to save the honour of the French government on the subject of Malta—if the question of Malta is principally considered by them as a question of honour—and, at the same time, hold out to them such important advantages, that the success of the proposition is at least worth trying, particularly as the result of it might be productive of the most easy means of adjusting the most material of our present differences.

With respect to the assertion so often advanced and repeated by M. Talleyrand in your last conversations of the non-execution of the treaty of Amiens relative to Malta, I have only to observe again, that the execution of that article is become impracticable from causes which it has not been in the power of his majesty to control. That the greatest part of the funds assigned to the support of the order, and indispensably necessary for the independence of the order, and defence of the island, have been sequestrated since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, in direct repugnance to the spirit and letter of that treaty; and that two of the principal powers who were invited to accede as guarantees to the arrangement, have refused their accession, except on the conditions that the part of the arrangement which was deemed so material relative to the Maltese inhabitants should be entirely cancelled. The conduct of the French government, since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, gives his majesty a right, which is now at length, admitted by themselves, to demand some compensation for the past and security for the future. Such compensation could never be considered as obtained by the possession of an island, which would only entail a very heavy expense on this country;—and the degree of security which would be provided by these means, would only be such as his majesty, under the present circumstances, is entitled to demand.

I observe, in the note verbale of monsieur Talleyrand, he makes use of the expression, *the independence of the order* of Malta. If this is meant to apply to the order exclusively, his majesty would be willing, for the preservation of peace, that the civil government of the island should be given to the order of St. John; the Maltese enjoying the privileges which were stipulated in their favour in the treaty of Amiens; and that, conformably to principles which have been adopted on other occasions, the fortifications of the island should be garrisoned for ever by the troops of his majesty.

In the event of either of these propositions being found unattainable, his majesty might be disposed to consent to an arrangement by which the island of Malta would remain in his possession for a limited number of years, and to wave in consequence his demand for a perpetual occupation, provided that the number of years was not less than ten, and that his Sicilian majesty could be induced to cede the sovereignty of the island of Lampedosa for a valuable consideration. If the proposition is admitted, the island of Malta should be given up to the inhabitants at the end of that period, and it should be acknowledged as an independent state. In this case, his majesty would be ready to concur in any arrangement for the establishment of the order of St. John in some other part of Europe.

You will not refuse to listen to any proposition which the French government may be disposed to make to you with a view to an equivalent security for those objects in regard to which his majesty claims the possession or occupation of Malta; but the three propositions to which I have above alluded, appear, at the present moment, to furnish the only basis for a satisfactory arrangement; and you will decline receiving any proposition which does not appear to you to offer advantages to his majesty as substantial as that which I have last stated.

It is very desirable that you should bring the negotiation to an issue, if possible, without referring to his majesty's government for further instructions, after the receipt of this dispatch; and if you should be of opinion that there is no hopes of bringing it to a favourable conclusion, you may inform M.

Digitized by Google

Talleyrand of the necessity you will be under, after a certain time, to leave Paris. I have, &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 57.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, April 18th, 1803.

My Lord;—I did not fail to put into immediate execution the instructions contained in your lordship's dispatch (No. 11.), on the subject of the libel inserted by the French minister in the Hamburgh gazette. I represented the outrageous and unprecedented conduct of M. Rheinhardt in such terms as it deserves; and fairly declared to M. de Talleyrand, that, until satisfaction shall be given to his majesty for the indignity which has been offered him by the French minister, in his official character, there could be no possibility whatever of bringing the present discussion to an amicable issue. M. de Talleyrand assured me, that the French government saw the conduct of M. de Rheinhardt in the same light as his majesty's ministers, and that they could not be more surprised than the first consul had been at seeing such an article inserted by authority; that an immediate explanation had been required of M. Rheinhardt, five days ago; and if his conduct had been such as had been represented, he would, doubtless, feel the effects of the first consul's displeasure; and that, in the mean time, I might inform your lordship that he was completely disavowed. I told M. de Talleyrand, that, as the insult had been public, it would be necessary that the reparation should be so also. He answered me again, that the first consul considered M. Rheinhardt's conduct as so reprehensible, that every satisfaction might be expected. I have, &c.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

No. 58.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated April 18th, 1803.

My Lord;—I have the honourto acknowledge the receipt of your lordship's dispatches of the 13th instant. I saw Joseph Buonaparté immediately on the receipt of your lordship's dispatch; and without troubling your lordship with a repetition of the arguments I used to hasten the conclusion of the negotiation, amongst which I endeavoured to convince him of the importance of preventing the *ultimatum* which would inevitably follow the rejection of what I had to propose, I will briefly state, that, on finding it perfectly impracticable to establish the principle of our keeping possession of Malta in perpetuity, I delivered to him, in writing, the second proposal I had to make. He did not fail to observe, that, by this modification, the difficulty which he considered as insurmountable was not removed; that although the order was restored, it could not be considered as independent; and, in fact, Malta would belong to that power which had possession of the forts. I enforced the adoption of this plan by every reason which could serve to recommend it; but the possession in perpetuity was constantly urged as a difficulty which nothing could remove. Our conversation lasted near two hours. I confess that I gained no solid ground of hope that the project, which he assured me he would take to the first consul at St. Cloud, would be adopted. But he said that he was not without hope that he might be authorized to propose to me the occupation of the fortresses for a term of years. It was my wish, that such a proposal should come from him rather than from me. I told him that I did not well see how such a tenure would suit us; but that I wished too sincerely to avoid the fatal extremities to which I saw the discussion was tending, not to give any reasonable proposal which might be made on their part every assistance in my power. This proposal originated with him, and was therefore received by me merely as a matter which I would refer to your lordship. If, however, I can bring the matter to an immediate conclusion, and without further reference to your lordship, on the principle of our retaining possession of the fortresses of Malta for a term of years, not less than that pointed out by your lordship, and with the assurance that this government will not oppose the cession of the island of Lampedosa, I shall have great pleasure in announcing to your lordship such a conclusion.

I do not enter into detail of the conversation which I had the same morning with M. de Talleyrand, immediately upon my leaving Joseph Buonaparté, as it differed in nowise from what I have above-mentioned. He suggested also the possibility of coming to an arrangement on the ground of a temporary occupation, and I made him the same answer.

Such is the state of the discussion at this moment. I am in expectation of hearing very shortly either from Joseph or M. de Talleyrand; and I am not without hopes that I may be able to announce to your lordship that such an arrangement is made, as may answer his majesty's expectations, in a very few days. Your lordship may be assured, that I feel the necessity of expedition. Were it less urgent, I might, perhaps, hope to bring the discussion to even a more favourable issue. I have, &c.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

[Inclosure referred to in No. 58.]

His majesty will consent, for the sake of preserving peace, that the government of the island of Malta shall be given to the order of St. John; the Maltese enjoying those privileges which have been granted on former occasions. The fortifications of the island shall be occupied, in perpetuity, by the troops of his majesty.

Digitized by Google

No. 59.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris April 20th, 1803.

My Lord;—I had hoped that the first extraordinary messenger I should have occasion to send, would have been to announce to your lordship, that the differences between the two governments were adjusted on one of the modifications pointed out to me by my last instructions from your lordship. In this expectation I am deceived. I saw Joseph Buonaparté the night before last, before I had sealed up my dispatches of that evening to your lordship; but as all he said tended only to justify the hope I had given your lordship in those dispatches, I added nothing to them. He assured me, positively, that I should hear from M. de Talleyrand in the course of yesterday morning, and that a meeting would be appointed in order to settle the term of years for which the first consul might be induced to consent to the cession of Malta. It is true that he declared, that, in order to gain his consent, it would be necessary to hold out the advantages which the British government was willing to offer in return, meaning the acknowledgments of the new governments in Italy. I told him that this offer was made only with a view to the possession of Malta in perpetuity; but after some conversation, I gave him to understand, that I would not refuse to admit the demand, *sub sperati*, on the condition that the cession should be made for a considerable term of years; that Holland and Switzerland should be evacuated; and that a suitable provision should be made for the king of Sardinia. He seemed to think there could be no difficulty in this arrangement; and I left him in the persuasion, that I should the next day, yesterday, or this morning, receive the summons from M. de Talleyrand, which he had given me reason to expect.

I am sorry to say, that no such summons has been received by me, neither has any further notice been taken of the business. So that I feel that I should betray the confidence your lordship may place in me, were I to delay any longer requesting, that I may be immediately furnished with the terms on which his majesty's ministers would be willing to conclude, and which probably will not differ much from those above stated, in order that I may propose them in the form of an *ultimatum*; and that, at the expiration of the period allowed for deliberation, I may be authorized, not only to declare that I am to leave Paris, but actually so to do, unless, in the intermediate time, the French government should accede to our demands. I have, &c.

(Signed) Whitworth.

No. 60.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, dated April 23rd, 1803.

My Lord;—Your excellency's dispatches of the 18th and 20th instant have been received, and laid before the king. It is necessary for me to do little more on the present occasion than to refer you to my dispatch of the 13th of April, in which I stated to you the several propositions on which alone, in the judgment of his majesty, the differences between this country and France could be satisfactorily adjusted.

If, upon the receipt of this dispatch, it shall not have been in your power to bring the negotiation to a conclusion on any of the propositions to which I have above referred, it is his majesty's pleasure that you should communicate, officially, to the French government, that you have gone, in point of concession, to the full extent of your instructions; and that, if an arrangement, founded upon one of these propositions, cannot be concluded, without further delay, you have received his majesty's commands to return to England.

His majesty can only consent to relinquish the permanent occupation of Malta by his forces, on the conditions that the temporary possession shall not be less than ten years; that the authority, civil and military, shall, during that period, remain solely in his majesty; and that, at the expiration of that period, the island shall be given up to the inhabitants, and not to the order; and provided likewise, that his Sicilian majesty shall be induced to cede to his majesty the island of Lampedosa. It is indispensable that, as a part of this arrangement, Holland should be evacuated by the French troops within a short period after the conclusion of a convention, by which all those provisions are secured. His majesty will consent to acknowledge the new Italian states, upon the condition that stipulations in favour of his Sardinian majesty, and of Switzerland, form a part of this arrangement.

It is his majesty's pleasure that, in the event of the failure of the negotiation, you should delay your departure from Paris no longer than may be indispensably necessary for your personal convenience; and that you should, in no case, remain there, after the receipt of this dispatch, more than seven days. I have, &c.

Hawkesbury.

No. 61.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, April 23rd, 1803.

My Lord;—As I heard nothing from M. de Talleyrand, I called on him on Thursday, in order to learn the effect of the proposal which I had made, conformably to your lordship's instructions, on the basis of a perpetual possession of the forts of Malta, on re-establishing the order in the civil government of the island. He told me, that if I had called on him sooner, he should, two days ago, have communicated to me the first consul's answer, which was, that no consideration on earth should induce him to consent to a conces-

Digitized by Google

sion in perpetuity of Malta, in any shape whatever; and that the re-establishment of the order was not so much the point to be discussed, as that of suffering Great Britain to acquire a possession in the Mediterranean. I told him that I did not call sooner because I was given to understand that he would have himself proposed it to me, for the purpose of communicating the answer of the first consul; and that it did not, in any shape, become me to put myself on the footing of a solicitor in this transaction. After some conversation, and finding (what I most sincerely believe to be the case) that the first consul's determination was fixed on the point of a possession of Malta in perpetuity; I repeated to him what I had previously suggested to Joseph Buonaparté, the modification which I had to propose, namely, that, for the sake of peace, his majesty would be willing to wave his pretensions to a possession in perpetuity, and would consent to hold Malta for a certain number of years to be agreed upon, on the condition that no opposition should be made, on the part of the French government, to any negotiation his majesty might set on foot with his Sicilian majesty, for the acquisition of the island of Lampedosa. We discussed this proposal in a conversation of some length; and I made use of all the arguments which have been furnished me by your lordship, or which occurred to me, in its favour. I begged him, particularly, to recollect that we were in actual possession of the object, and that, therefore, every modification tending to limit that possession was, in fact, a concession on the part of his majesty, and a proof of his desire to sacrifice, to his love of peace, the just claim which he had acquired in consequence of the conduct of France, and which had recently been admitted, of a much more considerable compensation and counterpoise. M. de Talleyrand did not seem disposed to dispute any of my positions, and I left him, I confess, fully impressed with the idea, that the next day (Friday) I should find him prepared to treat on this ground, and that the only difficult point to be arranged would be, the number of years for which Malta should be ceded to his majesty.

Your lordship will conceive my surprise, when, on seeing him the next day, he told me, that, although he had not been able to obtain from the first consul all he wished, still the proposition he had to make would, he trusted, be such as fully to answer the purpose; he then said, that the first consul would on no terms hear either of a perpetual or a temporary possession of Malta; that his object was, the execution of the treaty of Amiens; and that rather than submit to such an arrangement as that I had last proposed, he would even consent to our keeping the object in dispute for ever; on the ground that, in the one there was an appearance of generosity and magnanimity, but in the other, nothing but weakness and the effect of coercion; that, therefore, his resolution was taken, and what he had to propose was the possession we required of the island of Lampedosa, or of any other of the small isles, of which there were three or four between Malta and the coast of Africa; that such a possession would be sufficient for the object we had in view, which was a station in the Mediterranean, as a place of refuge and security for any squadron we might find it convenient to keep in that sea. I suffered him to expatiate a considerable time, and without interruption, on the great advantage we were to derive from such an acquisition, as well as on the confidence which the first consul reposed in our pacific intention in lending a hand to such an establishment. He concluded by desiring I would transmit this proposal to your lordship. I told him that I was extremely sorry indeed, to find that we had made such little progress in the negotiation; that my orders were positive; that I could hear of nothing short of what I had proposed, neither could I possibly undertake to make such a proposal to his majesty, since every word of my instructions (from which I certainly should not depart) applied positively to Malta, unless an equivalent security could be offered; and surely he would not pretend to tell me that Lampedosa could be considered as such; that the possession of Malta was necessary for our security, and was rendered so not from any desire of aggrandizement on the part of his majesty, but by the conduct of the French government; and that so strongly were we impressed with the necessity, that, rather than abandon it, we were prepared to go to war. That it was on this ground I must declare to him, that I could neither take upon myself to forward such a proposal as he had made to me, or, indeed, any thing short of what I had last proposed as a fair equivalent. That, in so doing, I acted in conformity to his majesty's views, who would most assuredly disapprove of my conduct, were I, by unnecessarily protracting the negotiation, to add one day, or one hour, if it could be avoided, to the suspense and anxiety under which his own subjects and all Europe must labour at such a crisis; that I had hoped the French government, actuated by the same generous motives, would have acted in the same manner; that it might, by pursuing a contrary line of conduct, gain still a few days; but I must declare, that, in a very short time, I should have to communicate to him those very terms from which his were so wide, but to draw nearer to which was, perhaps, the object of his negotiating, in the form of an *ultimatum*, which would at least have one good effect, that of bringing the matter to an issue, and the certainty even of war was preferable to the present state of indecision.

To all I could say, M. Talleyrand objected the dignity and honour of the first consul, which could not admit of his consenting to any thing which might carry with it the ap-

Digitized by Google

pearance of yielding to a threat. I told him that it never could be admitted that the first consul had a right to act in such a manner as to excite jealousy and create alarm in every state of Europe, and when asked for explanation or security, say that it was contrary to his honour or his dignity to afford either. Such arguments might, perhaps, do, when applied to some of those governments with which France had been accustomed to treat, or more properly to dictate to, but never could be used to Great Britain; that his majesty had a right to speak freely his opinion, and possessed also the means, whenever he chose to employ them, of opposing a barrier to the ambition of any individual, or of any state, which should be disposed to threaten the security of his dominions, or the tranquillity of Europe.

Our conversation concluded by M. de Talleyrand's assuring me, that he would report the substance of it to the first consul in the evening, and that, probably, he should have occasion to see me on the following day. I have, &c.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

No. 62.—Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, April 25th, 1803.

My Lord;—The conversation I had on Saturday morning with M. Talleyrand has produced nothing from which I can draw a more favourable conclusion, as to the result of the negotiation, than when I last addressed your lordship. He told me, that although he had seen the first consul the night before, he had nothing to add to what he had communicated to me on Friday; that the first consul was determined not to give his consent to our retaining Malta, either in perpetuity or for a term, although, of the two, he would prefer the former, as the less repugnant to his feelings; that he was therefore ordered to repeat the proposal he had lately made me, of acceding to our demand of Lampedosa, or any of the neighbouring islands; and that, as our object was, to obtain a settlement in the Mediterranean, he imagined that which we had ourselves pointed out would answer every purpose we might have in view. But, at all events, the first consul neither could nor would relinquish his claim to the full execution of the treaty of Amiens. To this I could only repeat what I had already said to him on the inadequacy of such a proposal, and of the impossibility in which I found myself to transmit it to your lordship. I lamented the course which the negotiation was taking, and that the first consul should have so little regard to the dreadful consequences which must ensue, as to suffer them to be outweighed by a mistaken notion of dignity. And I added, that notwithstanding the acquiescence which he might have met with from others, the plea of its being incompatible with the dignity of the French government to give satisfaction or security, when both might with justice be demanded, could never be admitted by Great Britain.

M. de Talleyrand heard every thing I could say with the utmost patience, notwithstanding he had nothing satisfactory to say, and seemed unwilling to break up the conference. He constantly brought forward the same inadmissible proposal, requesting that I would at least communicate it to your lordship. This, I told him, I could not refuse to do, since every thing which passed between him and me must, of course, make the subject of my reports to your lordship. I declared, however, at the same time, that I should not think myself by any means authorized to suspend the execution of any instructions I might receive, tending to bring the negotiation to an issue, in the expectation of any change which such a proposal might produce. All I could do, and that I would certainly do, would be to communicate the *ultimatum*, if his majesty should think proper to furnish me with it, confidentially to M. de Talleyrand, before I presented it officially to him, as minister for foreign affairs. He assured me that he should consider such a conduct as a further proof of my desire to conciliate, and that he could not yet forbear hoping that the differences might be adjusted. I repeated that if his hope was founded on the expectation of his majesty being induced to recede from his demand, it would be deceiving himself to cherish it.

The remainder of the conversation turned on the calamities which would follow the failure of our endeavour to avoid a rupture. He insinuated that Holland, Naples, and other countries connected with Great Britain, would be the first victims of the war. I asked him whether he thought that such a conduct would add to the glory of the first consul, or whether the falling on the innocent and defenceless would not rather tarnish it, and ultimately unite against him, not only the honest men in his own country, but every government in Europe.—That it certainly would excite more detestation than terror in England, at the same time that it would serve to impress upon us still more strongly the necessity of omitting no means of circumscribing a power so perniciously exerted. I could not help adding, that although no act of hostility had actually taken place, yet the inveteracy with which our commerce, our industry, and our credit had been attacked in every part to which French influence could be extended, did, in fact, almost amount to the same, since it went to prove, in addition to the general system of the first consul, that his object was to pursue, under the mask of peace, the same line of conduct in which the preceding governments had acted.

I now trust entirely to the effect of the *ultimatum*, which will at least convince him that we are in earnest, and that he has nothing to expect from protraction. I shall not, however, as I said before make use of this

Digitized by Google

officially, until I have tried its effect in a more conciliatory manner. I have, &c.
(Signed) WHITWORTH.

P. S. Your lordship's dispatches of the 23rd, with their inclosures, were delivered to me, by Shaw, this evening at nine o'clock. I shall see M. de Talleyrand to-morrow morning; and I trust your lordship will not disapprove my following the line of conduct I had proposed, and which I have mentioned to your lordship, of informing him of the nature of my instructions, a few hours before I carry them officially into execution. W.

No. 63.—Extract of a dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, April 27th, 1803.

I avail myself of the opportunity of a messenger passing through from Constantinople and Vienna, to inform your lordship of the state of the negotiation at this moment. I communicated to M. de Talleyrand the purport of my instructions of the 23rd, yesterday at four o'clock. He immediately asked me if the possession of Malta was still insisted upon. I told him most certain it was; and I repeated to him the particulars of the terms on which it was yet possible to conclude the business. That these were, the possession of Malta for ten years, during which period the authority, civil and military, was to remain solely in his majesty, and that at the expiration of that term it was to be given up to the inhabitants, and not to the order; provided, also, that his Sicilian majesty shall be induced to cede to his majesty the island of Lampedosa; that Holland should be evacuated by the French troops within a month after the conclusion of a convention by which all these provisions shall be secured; and that his majesty would consent to acknowledge the new Italian states, provided stipulations were made in favour of his Sardinian majesty and of Switzerland.

I had no sooner made known these conditions, than M. de Talleyrand told me it would be perfectly unnecessary to delay the official communication; for, as the possession of Malta was still insisted upon, although for a term, the first consul would not consent to them. I accordingly did repeat them to him in the manner he desired; when he told me that he comprehended perfectly what we required, but that, in similar cases, it was usual to state the demand in writing, and he desired I would give him a note upon the subject. I told him that I would repeat to him once more, or as often as he pleased, the express terms which I had stated to him, and that as my communication to him was verbal, I should, of course, be content with an answer in the same form. He consented, at length, to receive it, and to communicate to me the first consul's answer as soon as possible. I desired that he would recollect, that Tuesday next must be the day of my departure.

No. 64.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated April 29th, 1803.

My last letter to your lordship was of yesterday evening. This morning a person came to me, whom I suspect of being employed by the first consul, for the purpose of ascertaining my sentiments, and told me that I should, in the course of the day, receive a letter from M. de Talleyrand, drawn up under the inspection of the first consul, which, although not exactly what I might wish, was, however, so moderate as to afford me a well-grounded hope, and might certainly be sufficient to induce me to delay, for a short time, my departure. I told him that it would be a matter of great satisfaction to me to perceive a probability of bringing the negotiation to a favourable issue; and that I should be extremely sorry to spoil the business by any useless precipitation. But it must be recollected, that I acted in conformity to instructions; that those instructions were positive; that by them I was enjoined to leave Paris on Tuesday next, unless, in the intermediate time, certain conditions were agreed to. Having received no letter in the course of the day, about four o'clock I went to M. de Talleyrand; I told him that my anxiety to learn whether he had any thing favourable to tell me, brought me to him, and in case he had not, to recall to his recollection that Tuesday was the day on which I must leave Paris, and to request that he would have the necessary passports prepared for me and my family. He appeared evidently embarrassed; and after some hesitation observed, that he could not suppose I should really go away; but that, at all events, the first consul never would recall his ambassador. To this I replied, his majesty recalled me in order to put an end to the negotiation, on the principle that even actual war was preferable to the state of suspense in which England, and indeed all Europe, had been kept for so long a space of time. From the tenor of his conversation, I should rather be led to think that he does not consider the case as desperate. Upon my leaving him, he repeatedly said, *J'ai encore de l'Espoir.*

Saturday Evening.

P. S. This day has passed without any occurrence whatever. The letter in question has not yet arrived.

No. 65.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated May 2nd, 1803.

Another day has passed over without producing any change. I determined to go myself to M. de Talleyrand, and to deliver, instead of sending, the inclosed letter. I told him that it was with great reluctance that I came to make this last application to him. That I had long since informed him of the

Digitized by Google

extent of the term which had been assigned for my stay at Paris, and that as I had received to this moment, no answer whatever to the proposal I had repeatedly made, I could no longer delay requiring him to furnish me with the necessary passports for the return of myself, my family, and the remainder of my mission, to England. Upon this I gave him the letter, a copy of which I inclose, and, on reading it, he appeared somewhat startled. He lamented that so much time had been lost; but said that enough remained, if I was authorized to negociate upon other terms. I could of course but repeat to him, that I had no other terms to propose, and that, therefore, unless the first consul could so far gain upon himself as to sacrifice a false punctilio to the certainty of a war, of which no one could foresee the consequence, nothing could possibly prevent my departure to-morrow night. He hoped, he said, this was not so near; that he would communicate my letter, and what I had said, to the first consul immediately, and that, in all probability, I should hear from him this evening. I thought it, however, right to apprise him, that it was quite impossible I could be induced to disobey his majesty's orders, and protract a negotiation on terms so disadvantageous to ourselves, unless he should furnish me with such a justification as would leave me no room to hesitate; and that I did not see that any thing short of a full acquiescence in his majesty's demands could have that effect. He repeated, that he would report the conversation to the first consul, and that I should shortly hear from him. In this state the business now rests; I am expecting either a proposition, or my passports, and am consequently taking every measure for setting out to-morrow night.

[Inclosure referred to in No. 65.]

Paris, May 2nd, 1803.

Sir;—When I had the honour, on Tuesday last, of communicating to you, officially, the last propositions which I was instructed by my court to submit to the French government, for the sake of removing the present difficulties, I had the honour to announce to you, that, in case the first consul should not consent to these propositions, I should find myself under the necessity of leaving Paris in eight days. We are nearly arrived at the end of this period, without my having received any answer to this communication. It remains for me only, therefore, to obey the orders of the king my master to return to him; and, for this purpose, I entreat you, sir, to have the goodness to furnish me with the necessary passports.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

No. 66.—Extract of a dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, May 4th, 1803.

Soon after I had dispatched the messenger, the night before last, with my dispatches of the 3rd, I received a communication from M. de Talleyrand, of which I inclose a copy, the purport of which was so completely short of every thing which could be satisfactory, that I did not think myself authorized to enter into any discussion upon it; and, as early as I could on the following morning, I returned the answer, of which the inclosed is a copy.

After this I concluded, of course, that there was an end to the negotiation. I had, for some days past, been preparing for my departure; every measure was taken for setting out at four o'clock this morning, and we were expecting only the passports which I had demanded, for the purpose of ordering the post horses. The day and the evening passed without the passports having been sent; and whilst we were deliberating on the motives of such a delay, about twelve o'clock at night, a gentleman who was with me received a communication, which convinced me that it was not meant to give me my passports without another attempt, and I was, therefore, not surprised when, about one o'clock, I received the inclosed note from M. de Talleyrand. In this situation I am waiting the hour of rendezvous with M. de Talleyrand.

[First Inclosure referred to in No. 66.]

The undersigned has reported to the first consul the conversation which he had with his excellency lord Whitworth, on the 6th of this month, and in which his excellency announced, that his Britannic majesty had ordered him to make, verbally, in his name, the following demands: 1st. That his Britannic majesty should retain his troops at Malta for ten years. 2nd. That the island of Lampedosa should be ceded to him in full possession. 3rd. That the French troops should evacuate Holland. And that if no convention, on this basis, should have been signed within a week, his excellency lord Whitworth had orders to terminate his mission, and to return to London.

On the demand made by the undersigned, that lord Whitworth would, in conformity to the usage of all ages, and of all countries, give in writing what he himself called the *ultimatum* of his government, his excellency declared, that his instructions expressly forbade him to transmit, on this subject, any written note.

The intentions of the first consul being entirely pacific, the undersigned dispenses with making any observations on so new and so strange a manner of treating on affairs of this importance.

And, in order to give a fresh testimony of the value which he attaches to the continuance of peace, the first consul has directed the undersigned to make the following notification in the accustomed style and forms.

As the island of Lampedosa does not belong to France, it is not for the first consul either to accede to or to refuse the desire testified by his Britannic majesty, of having this island in his possession.

Digitized by Google

With regard to the island of Malta, as the demand made respecting it by his Britannic majesty would change a formal disposition in the treaty of Amiens, the first consul cannot but previously communicate it to his majesty the king of Spain, and to the Batavian republic, contracting parties to the said treaty, in order to know their opinion; and besides, as the stipulations relative to Malta have been guaranteed by their majesties the emperor of Germany, the emperor of Russia, and the king of Prussia, the contracting parties to the treaty of Amiens, before they agree to any change in the article of Malta, are bound to concert with the guaranteeing powers.

The first consul will not refuse this concert, but it belongs not to him to propose it, since it is not he who urges any change in the guaranteed stipulations.

With regard to the evacuation of Holland by the French troops, the first consul has no difficulty in directing the undersigned to repeat that the French troops shall evacuate Holland at the instant that the stipulations of the treaty of Amiens shall be executed in every quarter of the globe, &c.

CH. MAU. TALLEYRAND.

Paris, 12 Floreal, Year 11, (2nd May, 1803.)

[Second Inclosure referred to in No. 66.]

The undersigned, in answer to the note which M. de Talleyrand transmitted to him yesterday evening, has the honour to observe to him, that the king has had no other motive in seeking to accelerate the proceedings of the negotiation, than to relieve, as soon as possible, the two countries the most interested, and Europe in general, from the state of suspense in which they are placed. It is with great regret that he perceives nothing in his excellency's note which can correspond with this intention, and consequently nothing that can justify him in delaying to obey the orders of his court. It remains, therefore, only to request the minister for foreign affairs to give him the means of obeying them, by furnishing him with the necessary passports for his return. It is however necessary for him to rectify a mistake which has crept into M. de Talleyrand's note. The undersigned did not say he was expressly forbidden to transmit any written note on the object of the discussion, but that he was not authorized to do it, and that he would not take that responsibility on himself. He avails himself, &c.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

Paris, 3rd May, 1803.

[Third Inclosure referred to in No. 66.]

Paris, May 3, 1803.

My Lord;—Having to-morrow morning to make to you a communication of the greatest importance, I have the honour to inform you of it without delay, in order that you may not expect this evening the passports which you had demanded. I propose that you should call to-morrow, at half past four, at the foreign department. Receive, &c.

(Signed) CH. MAU. TALLEYRAND.

No. 67.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, May 4th, 1803.

I am this moment come from M. de Talleyrand. The inclosed note will show your lordship, that the idea which has been thrown out, is to give Malta to Russia. My only inducement for having undertaken to refer again to your lordship is, to avoid every reproach of precipitation. The difference will be but five days, and I have declared, that I see so many objections to the plan, that, although I would not refuse their solicitation to send it, I could give no hope whatever of its being accepted as a ground of negotiation.

[Inclosure referred to in No. 67.]

The undersigned has submitted to the first consul his Britannic majesty's note of the 3rd instant.

After the last communication, addressed to his excellency, it is more difficult than ever to conceive, how a great, powerful, and enlightened nation can be willing to take upon itself to declare a war, which would be accompanied by such heavy calamities, and the cause of which would be so insignificant, the object in question being a miserable rock.

His excellency must have been aware, that the twofold necessity of making an agreement with the guaranteeing powers of the treaty of Amiens, and of not violating a compact, in the execution of which, the honour of France, the security for the future, and the good faith of the diplomatic intercourse between the nations of Europe, were so deeply interested, had imposed a law upon the French government, of discarding every proposition diametrically contrary to the treaty of Amiens. —Nevertheless, the first consul, accustomed for two months to make every species of sacrifice for the maintenance of peace, would not reject a mezzo-termino of a nature to conciliate the interests and dignity of the two countries.

His Britannic majesty appears to have been of opinion, that the Neapolitan garrison, which was to be placed at Malta, would not afford a sufficient force for securing the actual independence of the island.

This motive being the only one which can explain his majesty's refusal to evacuate the island, the first consul is ready to consent, that the island of Malta shall be placed in the hands of one of the three powers who have guaranteed its independence—either Austria, Russia, or Prussia, with a proviso, that, as soon as France and England shall have come to an agreement upon this article, they shall unite in their requisitions, to engage other powers, either contract-

Digitized by Google

ing or acceding to the treaty of Amiens, to consent to it.

Were it possible that this proposition should not be accepted, it would be manifest, not only that England never intended to comply with the terms of the treaty of Amiens, but that she has not been actuated by good faith in any of her demands, and that in proportion as France conceded one point, the British government advanced another. If this should be demonstrated, the first consul will at least have given another proof of his sincerity, of his anxiety to devise the means of avoiding war, of his eagerness to embrace them, and of the value which he would place on their being adopted.—Paris, 14 Floreal, Year 11.

No. 68.—Dispatch from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, dated May 7th, 1803.

My Lord;—Your excellency's dispatches have been received, and laid before the king. The propositions which have been made to you, on the part of the French government, and which have induced your excellency to delay your departure until the return of the messenger Sylvester, are in every respect so loose, indefinite, and unsatisfactory, and fall so short of the just pretensions of his majesty, that it is impossible that the French government could have expected them to have been accepted. During the whole of the discussions which have lately occurred, his majesty has had a right to consider himself in the character of the injured party. No means have been omitted, on his part, to induce the French government to make a full and early explanation of their views, and to afford to his majesty that satisfaction and security to which he considered himself to be entitled. It was in consequence of the apparent determination of the French government, to evade all discussion on the points of the difference between the two countries, that his majesty was induced to state the grounds on which, according to his views, an arrangement might be concluded satisfactory to both governments: and he accordingly authorized your excellency to communicate the three projects which, at different times, I had forwarded to you.

Until the very moment when your excellency was about to leave Paris, the French government have avoided making any distinct proposition for the settlement of the differences between the two countries; and when, at the very instant of your departure, the French government felt themselves compelled to bring forward some proposition, they confined that proposition to a part only of the subject in discussion, and, on that part of it, what they have brought forward is wholly inadmissible.

The French government propose, that his majesty should give up the island of Malta, to a Russian, Austrian, or Prussian garrison. If his majesty should be disposed to wave his demand for a temporary occupation of the island of Malta, the emperor of Russia would be the only sovereign to whom, in the present state of Europe, he could consent that the island should be assigned; and his majesty has certain and authentic information, that the emperor of Russia would on no account consent to garrison Maltz. Under these circumstances, his majesty perseveres in his determination to adhere to the substance of his third project as his ultimatum: as, however, the principal objection stated by the French government to his majesty's proposition is understood to be confined to the insertion of an article in a public treaty, by which his majesty shall have a right to remain in possession of the island of Malta for a definite number of years (being in no case less than ten), it may be stated in a secret article; and the public articles may be agreed to conformably to the inclosed project. By this expedient, the supposed point of honour of the French government might be saved. The independence of the island of Malta would, in principle, be acknowledged, and the temporary occupation of his majesty would be made to depend *alone on the present state of the island of Lampedosa.*

You may propose this idea to M. Talleyrand, at the same time assuring him that his majesty is determined to adhere to the substance of his ultimatum. And if you shall not be able to conclude the minute of an arrangement on this principle, you will on no account remain in Paris more than thirty-six hours after the receipt of this dispatch.

I observe by your dispatch, you did not consider yourself authorized to deliver to the French government any note or project in writing. The words of my dispatch were, that you were to communicate the terms officially, which left it at your own discretion to communicate them verbally, or in writing, as you might judge most expedient. You were certainly right in communicating them, in the first instance, verbally; but, as so much stress has been laid by M. Talleyrand on this distinction, it is important that I should inform you, that his majesty neither had, nor has, any objection to your delivering the inclosed project as an ultimatum, accompanied by a short note in writing.

I cannot conclude this dispatch, without recalling again your attention to the conduct of the French minister at Hamburgh, and referring you to my instructions, by which you should abstain from concluding the arrangement, unless you have received from M. Talleyrand an assurance that his conduct would be publicly disavowed.—I have &c.

(Signed) HAWKESBURY.

No. 69.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, May 9th, 1803.

Digitized by Google

The messenger, Sylvester, is arrived with your lordship's dispatch, No. 15, of the 7th of May. As soon as I received your lordship's instructions, I prepared a translated copy of the project furnished me by your lordship, and a short note, with which it is my intention to accompany the communication. I then sent a person to Monsieur Talleyrand, to know when I could see him, and I was informed, that he was at St. Cloud. I soon after learnt that he was gone there in consequence of the accident which happened yesterday to the first consul. I understand that no bad consequences are likely to ensue, and that he is able to transact business. I cannot, however, expect to see M. Talleyrand before to-morrow morning. Although this circumstance may cause a delay of a few hours, your lordship may be assured, that the execution of those instructions with which you have furnished me, shall not be protracted. I shall leave Paris most assuredly, or have concluded a satisfactory arrangement, within the time specified by your lordship, reckoning from the moment of my being able to make an official communication, rather than from that of the receipt of your lordship's letter.

No. 70.—Extract of a Dispatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Paris, May 12th, 1803.

The messenger, Sylvester, as I mentioned in my last dispatch, returned on the 9th, at twelve o'clock; and I wrote to M. Talleyrand, informing him of it, and desiring him to name an hour when I might wait on him, in order to communicate to him the purport of my instructions. To this letter, I received no answer that evening or the following morning. Anxious to execute my orders, and to lose no time, I enclosed the project furnished me by your lordship, accompanied by an official note, and a private letter to M. de Talleyrand, and sent it to the foreign department by Mr. Mandeville, with directions to deliver it to M. de Talleyrand, or, in his absence, to the *Chef du Bureau*. He delivered it, accordingly, to M. Durand, who promised to give it to his chief as soon as he came in, which, he expected, he said, shortly. At half past four, having waited till that time in vain, I went myself to M. de Talleyrand; I was told that the family was in the country, and that they did not know when the minister would be in town. Half an hour after I had returned home, the packet which Mr. Mandeville had given into the hands of M. Durand, was brought to me, I believe, by a servant, with a verbal message, that as M. de Talleyrand was in the country, it would be necessary that I should send it to him there. In order to defeat, as much as depended upon me, *their intention of gaining time*, I wrote again to M. de Talleyrand, recapitulating the steps I had taken since the return of the messengers; and desired Mr. Talbot, the secretary of the embassy, to take it, himself, at nine o'clock at night, when I thought M. de Talleyrand would be at home, to his house at Meudon. He was, however, not at home. Mr. Talbot was told that he was at St. Cloud, where he had been all day, and that he would not be back until very late. He, therefore, left my private letter, with his name, and returned with the packet. It was my intention to have sent it on the following morning to the Bureau, with orders, that it should be left there; at one o'clock in the morning, I received a note from M. de Talleyrand, accounting for his not being able to answer me sooner, and appointing me at twelve o'clock at the *Bureau des Relations Extrieures*. I went at the appointed time. He began, by apologizing for having so long postponed the interview, which he attributed to his having been the whole day with the first consul. We then entered upon business. I told him that, limited as I was by your lordship's instructions, he could not be surprised at my impatience to acquit myself of my duty. I explained to him the nature of your lordship's observations on the proposal of the 4th; and that it was considered as, on one hand, impracticable, from the refusal of the emperor of Russia to take charge of Malta, and, on the other, as being wholly inadequate to his majesty's just pretensions. I gave him the note in which this was expressed, and the project, on which alone a satisfactory arrangement could be framed. He read with apparent attention, and without many remarks; and, after some time, he asked me, if I felt myself authorized, by my instructions, to conclude with him a convention, framed on the basis of my project, or, indeed, extending that basis, since the first article of it would be the perpetual possession of Malta to England, in a return for a consideration. I told him, I most certainly was not authorized to enter into any engagement of such a nature, which would make the negotiation one of exchange, instead of a demand of satisfaction and security. To this he replied, that the satisfaction and security which we required was Malta, and that this we obtained. That the first consul could not accede to what he considered, and what must be considered by the public and by Europe, as the effect of coercion, but if it were possible to make the draft palatable, did I think myself justifiable in refusing to do so. I told him that, acting in strict compliance with my instructions, I could have no need of justification, and that I came to him with the determination of abiding strictly by them. He contended, that by communicating a project, I merely stated on what grounds we would be willing to conclude, and that a counter-project, founded on the basis of giving us what we required, could not be refused a fair discussion. To this, I urged the resolution of his majesty's ministers, to avoid every thing which could protract the negotiation. That I saw no other means of acting up to those views, than by

Digitized by Google

making my stand on the project at all events. I urged him, repeatedly, to explain himself more fully on the nature of the demand which he should make for Malta, *but he could not, or would not, explain himself.* After much contest, it was agreed the proposal should be submitted to me in the course of a few hours, and that I should determine on the line of conduct I might feel myself justified in pursuing, either to sign it, to send it home, or to leave Paris.

The remainder of this day passed without receiving any communication from M. de Talleyrand. Upon this, I determined to demand my passports, by an official note, which I sent this morning by Mr. Mandeville, in order that I might leave Paris in the evening.

At two, I renewed my demand of passports, and was told I should have them immediately. They arrived at five o'clock, and I propose setting out as soon as the carriages are ready.

[First Inclosure referred to in No. 70.]

The undersigned, his Britannic majesty's ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the French republic, having transmitted to his court the proposal which was made to him by the minister for foreign affairs, on the third instant, has just received orders to transmit to his excellency the accompanying project of a convention, founded on the only basis which his majesty conceives, under the existing circumstances, to be susceptible of a definitive and amicable arrangement. The minister for foreign affairs will not fail to observe to what degree his majesty has endeavoured to conciliate the security of his interests with the dignity of the first consul. The undersigned flatters himself, that the first consul, doing justice to these sentiments, will adopt, in concert with his majesty, an expedient so suitable for restoring permanent tranquillity to both nations, and to all Europe. The undersigned, &c.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

[Second Inclosure referred to in No. 70.]

Project.—I. The French government shall engage to make no opposition to the cession of the island of Lampedosa to his majesty by the king of the Two Sicilies. II. In consequence of the present state of the island of Lampedosa, his majesty shall remain in possession of the island of Malta, until such arrangement shall be made to him, as may enable his majesty to occupy Lampedosa as a naval station; after which period, the island of Malta shall be given up to the inhabitants, and acknowledged as an independent state. III. The territories of the Batavian republic shall be evacuated by the French forces within one month after the conclusion of a convention, founded on the principles of this project. IV. The king of Etruria, and the Italian and Ligurian republics, shall be acknowledged by his majesty. V. Switzerland shall be evacuated by the French forces. VI. A suitable territorial provision shall be assigned to the king of Sardinia, in Italy.

Secret Article.—His majesty shall not be required by the French government to evacuate the island of Malta until after the expiration of ten years. Article IV, V, and VI, may be entirely omitted, or must all be inserted.

[Third Inclosure referred to in No. 70. Paris, May 10, 1803.]

Sir;—In order not to lose an instant of so precious a time, I have the honour to convey to you the project which I have received from my court, with the note which accompanies it. I shall have the honour of calling on your excellency at any hour you may appoint, in consequence of the request I made yesterday. But, in the mean while, you will be in possession of the contents of my instructions. I hope to God that they may be of a nature to insure the tranquillity of both countries and of Europe. I avail myself, &c.

(Signed) WHITWORTH.

[Fourth Inclosure, referred to in No. 70. Paris, May 10, 1803.]

Sir;—Having yesterday morning received some important instructions to communicate to you, I wrote to you that evening to ask your excellency at what hour I could have the honour to acquit myself of this duty. That letter has not been answered. At two o'clock this afternoon I sent Mr. Mandeville, attached to the embassy, to the office for foreign affairs, in order to deliver to your excellency, or in your absence to your first secretary, a sealed packet, containing the papers which I had to communicate to you, and I added a second letter to your excellency. M. Mandeville delivered this packet into the hands of M. Durand, who assured him that it should be communicated to you without delay. At half past four, not having received any answer to my letters, I went to the foreign office, and I there learnt that you were in the country, and that it was not known when you would return to town.

Half an hour afterwards, having returned home, the papers which my secretary had taken and delivered to M. Durand, were brought to me, with a message that I must send them to the minister in the country.

In this state of things, since your excellency does not give me an opportunity of making you this communication, I have no other alternative than to give it in charge to Mr. Talbot, secretary to the embassy. He will have the honour to deliver to you the project of a convention, which, I hope, will serve as the basis to an amicable arrangement between our two governments.

I have only to add, that the term of my stay in Paris is limited, and I must set out on my journey for England on Thursday morning,

Digitized by Google

if the negotiation is not favourably terminated before that time. I request you, &c.
(Signed) WHITWORTH.

[Fifth Inclosure referred to in No. 70.]

It being impossible for the undersigned to delay any longer executing the orders of his court, he finds himself obliged to request the minister for foreign affairs to have the goodness to expedite the necessary passports for his return to England. He requests, &c.
(Signed) WHITWORTH.

No. 71.—Extract of a Dispatch from Sir George Rumbold, Bart. to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Hamburgh, March 29, 1803.

Late last night it was determined that the senate should be convened extraordinarily on this day, in order to consider of a requisition from the French minister, to insert in the Hamburgh paper a most offensive article, intended as a justification of the first consul, and an attack on the measures of the British government. It is with great regret that I inform your lordship, that the senate have judged it prudent to comply with this demand; and that the article will be inserted in the paper of to-morrow. It is now in the hands of the publisher for that purpose. It was the wish of the senate that they might at least be allowed to omit or qualify the most offensive passages, but Mr. Rheinhardt said his orders were positive, for the *full and exact* insertion of the whole.

No. 72.—Extract of a Dispatch from Mr. Hill to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Copenhagen, April 2, 1803.

The French minister at Hamburgh, received orders from his government to have inserted in the public papers of that city, an article which was sent to him, containing a commentary upon his majesty's communication to parliament, respecting the necessity of increasing the military forces of the country in the present circumstances. The senate of Hamburgh consented with much repugnance to the insertion of this paragraph. The French minister desired that the same should be published in the papers of Altona; but the Danish magistrates said that they could not possibly permit it without an express order from this government. In consequence of this refusal, M. Daguesseau, the French minister at this court, received from his colleague at Hamburgh, a copy of the article, with a request that he would solicit the permission of its publication in the Danish papers. To my knowledge he had no answer yesterday, and I have every reason to suppose that this government will show the greatest reluctance in acceding to the French minister's request.

APPENDIX.—No. 1.—Report made to the French Consul by Colonel Sebastiani, extracted from the Moniteur of the 30th of January, 1803.

On the 16th of September I embarked at Toulon, on board the Cornélie; and on the 30th I arrived at Tripoli. I immediately wrote to baron Cederstrom, the Swedish rear-admiral, as well as to the minister of the pacha, to offer them my mediation to terminate the differences existing between the Swedish court and the Regency. My mediation was accepted: the minister and the rear-admiral repaired to the commissarial house of France, and we entered on the negotiation. The two parties were far asunder; the pacha demanded a considerable sum, and an augmentation of the annual tribute. He urged a treaty made two years ago by an envoy of the king of Sweden, which assured the payment of 245,000 heavy piastres, and of an annuity of 20,000; he added, that two years of war had subjected him to extraordinary expenses, and that he used great moderation in conforming himself to the treaty in question. M. de Cederstrom only offered, in the name of his court, 100,000 piastres for the redemption of the Swedish slaves, who were to the number of a hundred and fifty, and an annuity of 5,000 piastres. After much debate, I succeeded in making them sign a treaty which fixed the payment of the ransom at 150,000 piastres, and the annuity at 8,000.—On the 1st of October I was presented with much pomp to the pacha, who received me in the most distinguished manner. The exchange of the ratification of the treaty of peace took place, and the Italian republic was formally acknowledged. I caused its flag to be hoisted on the commissarial house of France, and it was saluted by the frigate and the place with twenty-one guns. It was not without difficulty that the pacha consented to acknowledge that republic. He feared that all Italy was comprised in this new republic, and that, in consequence, he would be obliged to respect indiscriminately all the ships of commerce of that part of Europe:—this would destroy his marine. I gave him the necessary explanations, and particularly those which related to the object of his apprehensions, and he replied to me, "Certainly I wish to be at peace with the Italian republic, without too much injuring my interest; but if it were still more difficult, I would do it, since the great Buonaparté desires it. The pacha of Tripoli is a brave and enterprising man, the friend of France. The English have furnished succours to his brother, who is at present at Derue, without means or credit. His plan is to raise the country against the bey. The political and administrative affairs of the regency are conducted by Seid-Muhammed-el-Deghais, minister of the pacha. This man is full of sagacity, and has even some notions of European politics. He has been in France, and preserves for our country a predominant sentiment of affection. On the 2nd of October I set out from Tripoli, and on the 16th arrived at Alexandria: the same day I waited upon general Stuart, commandant of the

Digitized by Google

English forces by land and sea. I communicated to him the order of the minister for foreign affairs, which enjoined me to proceed to Alexandria, and, if the English still occupied that place, to demand a speedy evacuation, and the execution of the treaty of Amiens. General Stuart then told me, that the evacuation of the place would shortly be effected; but seeing that I insisted, and that I desired an answer less vague, he declared to me, that he had no orders from his court to quit Alexandria, and that he even believed he should pass the winter there. General Stuart is a man of *mediocre* talents: he has for his aide-de-camp a French emigrant, called the Chevalier de Sades, a man of talent, and an enemy of France, who has much influence over the general. I went the same day to see Khourchid-Ahmid, the pacha of Alexandria and the capitan bey, commander of the forces of the Ottoman Porte. After the customary compliments, and some language agreeable to the Sublime Porte, I announced to them, that the agents of French commerce would assemble in Egypt. This communication gave them the greatest pleasure, and they did not conceal that they saw with grief the stay of the English in the country. I told them that their stay could not be much longer, and that the general peace left no doubt of their approaching departure. On the 17th I visited the cheik El-Messiry. The same day I also visited the cheik Ibrahim Mufti. On the 18th I visited the Coupure du Khalidj, which has formed the lake Mareotis. The current of the waters of the lake Madié is still very strong, and if the Porte does not make haste to re-establish this important canal, the overflows which take place on the little tongue of land that separates the two lakes, will render the opening so considerable, that it will be impossible to travel. I do not think that the Swedish engineer sent by the Porte to direct these labours has the necessary talents. The formation of the lake Mareotis appears to have contributed to the salubrity of the air. The city has no other water than what it draws from the wells of Marabouf. This little fort I found guarded by an English and Turkish garrison, in order to protect the inhabitants who came to draw water. I employed the day of the 19th in perambulating the town, and receiving different individuals who came to visit me. On the 20th, I set out for Cairo, escorted by two Turkish officers, and six French soldiers, whom I had taken on board the frigate; but contrary winds obliged me to return to the port. The next day I was at Aboukir, where I passed the night. I profited by this opportunity to visit the fort, which is in a very ruined state. On the 22nd I arrived at Rosetta, after having visited the Fort Julien; I saw the same day Osman, Aga, and Duvanny of the town, as well as all the Christians who reside there. The 23rd I was at Faoné, where I visited the commandant of the place, the cadi, and the cheiks: I received from the latter, and from all those whom I entertained, protestations of attachment to the first consul. I passed the next day at Ralimanie, where I visited the cheik Muhammed Abou-Aly; the fort of the town is almost entirely destroyed. I visited on the 25th, at Menouf, the cheik Abdin, whom the first consul had appointed cadi. The other cheiks of that town who came to visit me held the same language as those of Faoné. I said to them, "the first consul loves your country much, he speaks of it often; he interests himself in your happiness; he did not forget you, and recommended you to the Porte. He has made peace with Europe, and this country will feel the interest which he takes, and the recollection which he has preserved of the poor cheiks of Egypt." — Muhammed Kachef-Zourba Matzellem, who commanded at Menouf on my journey through that town, has been beheaded, in consequence of being accused of communications with the Mamelouks. The two forts of Menouf are destroyed. I arrived the same day at Boulak. I sent immediately citizen Joubert to inform the pacha of Cairo of my arrival. The next morning, the 26th, the pacha sent 300 cavalry and 200 infantry, commanded by the principal officers of his household, to accompany me to him, amidst a great many discharges of artillery. Having arrived at the pacha's, I said to him, "peace has been concluded between the French republic and the Sublime Porte; the ancient relations of amity and commerce have been re-established, and I am charged by the great consul Buonaparté to assure you of his benevolence, and to announce to you the arrival of commissaries of the French commerce in Egypt." The pacha answered me, "the benevolence with which the first consul has honoured me penetrates me with gratitude, and his commercial agents shall meet here the most friendly reception." I proceeded then to the house which the pacha had prepared for me. I received the same day the visits of all the principal men of the country, and of the Copt intendants. On the 27th I again repaired to the pacha, with whom I had a long conference. I spoke to him in these words: "the first consul takes in you, and the country which you govern, a very lively interest, and desires to contribute to your happiness; he has charged me therefore to offer you his mediation, in order to make peace between you and the beys."

The pacha thanked me warmly and sincerely for the interest which the first consul took in his behalf; but he protested to me, that he had the most positive orders from his court to make a war of extermination upon the beys, and not to enter into any arrangement with them. I observed, that the unfortunate circumstances which had happened to the Ottoman troops (they had been beaten five times successively by the Mamelouks) rendered their position very critical, and that obstinacy exposed them to the loss of the

Digitized by Google

province. He then communicated to me the order of the Porte, and I saw beyond a doubt that it was not possible for him to enter into any accommodation. I informed him that I intended to visit the different cheiks of Cairo, and also Madame Murad Bey, and to inspect the environs and fortifications of the city. He ordered immediately that the guard which he had sent should accompany me wherever I wished to go, informing me, that he would use every means in his power to render my stay at Cairo agreeable. The same day I commenced my visits, beginning with the cheik Abdallah-el-Chescanoi, of the Great Mosque. As I was expected by him, he had assembled a considerable number of cheiks. The conversation turned upon the interest which the first consul took in Egypt, on his power, his glory, and on his esteem and benevolence for the learned cheiks of Cairo. Their answers expressed their attachment to his person. He must have been a witness, like myself, to the enthusiasm excited at the view of the portrait of the first consul, to form an idea of the exaltation of their sentiments. I have given it to all the principal cheiks of Cairo, and of the towns where I have travelled. On the 28th I invited the cheik Omar El-Berky, prince of the Shiriss: he was ill, and I saw only his son. The cheik Suleiman El-Fargoumy received me with much friendship, and assured me of his boundless admiration for the first consul. The citizens Joubert and Beye have certified to me that the inhabitants of Cairo never testified so much attachment to France as on my arrival. When we pass along the streets, every body salutes us. Their astrologers make predictions every day as to what concerns the first consul. On the 29th I went to visit Madame Murad Bey: her intendant had already prayed of me that I would grant her an interview. I informed her, that the first consul had charged me to interpose my mediation, in order to make their peace with the Sublime Porte; but that the pacha had ordered that no negotiation should be entered into. I employed that day and the following in visiting the citadel, the Isle of Ro da Gizé, Boulak, and all the other little forts which surround the city. The Turkish soldiers murmured to see me visit their forts, but I feigned not to hear them, and continued my course and my observations. On the 29th, in returning to Fort Dupuy, a soldier menaced me with his attagan: but as the inhabitants of the city testified highly their indignation against him, I did not stop at his menaces, and continued my route. A moment afterwards Mustapha Oukil, one of the chiefs of the city, passed before me on horseback. In passing, he reproached my guides with marching before a Christian, and, above all, before a Frenchman, and menaced them with the bastinado after my departure. I could not be silent under such an insult; and upon my return, I sent citizen Joubert to the pacha to make my complaint, and demand a prompt redress. I declared to him that I expected this man would come publicly to me to ask my pardon, place himself at my disposal, and implore my pity. He found that Mustapha was greatly protected by the pacha, and wanted to arrange it otherwise; but I persisted by declaring formally to the pacha, that, if this reparation was not made in the manner in which I demanded it, I should instantly depart, and immediately write to Paris and Constantinople to state my complaint. This declaration produced all the effect which I expected; and Mustapha, alarmed, came on the following day to me, conducted by Rosetti, and he publicly asked my pardon, and put himself at my disposal. I told him that my first intention had been to cut off his head, and that I only gave him his life at the solicitations of the pacha and M. Rosetti; but if in future he should ever insult the French, or those in their suite, his destruction would be inevitable. This affair, which was instantly spread throughout the whole city, produced the best effect. The same day an attempt was made to excite the Albanese against me. Two letters from Rosetta, written by English protegées; assured that there had been seen upon the coasts of Natolia a French fleet of 300 sail; that we were marching against Constantinople, and that my visit to Egypt had no other object but to deceive them, and blind them to their dangers. I made the merchant come to me who had received the letter: I made him give it me. I instantly sent it to the pacha himself, telling him that this absurd news was spread to occasion disorders, and to endeavour to alter the good understanding which existed between France and the Sublime Porte; and I guaranteed the falsehood of it with my head. The pacha had discovered the snare, and did not fall into it. He even communicated to me a letter from general Stuart, which he had just received, and to which was joined an order of the day of the first consul, when he commanded the army of Egypt. This order of the day was dated in August 1799, and recalled to the recollection of the Egyptians that Constantinople was tributary to Arabia, and that the time was now come to restore Cairo to its supremacy, and to destroy the Eastern empire of the Ottomans. General Stuart begged the pacha to consider the spirit of that order, and to judge from it of our attachment, and of our peace with the Turks. I was indignant to find that a soldier of one of the most polite nations of Europe should degrade himself so far as to instigate assassination, by means of such an insinuation.—The pacha treated me with the greatest politeness, and the English at Cairo were witnesses of the attachment of that city to the French. I received a deputation from the monks of Mount Sinai, whom I recommended to the pacha: I wrote to their superior, to assure them of the friendship and protection of

Digitized by Google

the first consul. The monks of the Propaganda at Cairo, whom I placed under the national protection which they enjoyed before the war, celebrated a *Te Deum* for the prosperity of the first consul. I assisted at this ceremony, at which all the Christians of Cairo were present. The evening before my departure (the 2nd of November) I had another interview with the pacha, and recommended all the Christians of Cairo to his protection, as well as the Turks, who, during the residence of the French in Egypt, were connected with them. He not only promised to respect them, but even to treat them with bounty. On the 3rd, I set out in a conveyance of the pacha's, in order to repair to Damietta. The pacha ordered me to be escorted to Boulak, with the same honours that I received on the day of my arrival. I had written to captain Gourdin to repair to Damietta with the frigate, in order to convey me to Syria. On the 5th, I stopped a short time at Simenoud, and afterwards at Mansoura, where I saw the commandant of the city and the cheik Esseid-Muhammed-El-Chenaoni, who came to see me, as well as all the other cheiks. I spoke to them in the same manner as the other cheiks of Egypt, and received the same promises of attachment. The Tower of Mansura is destroyed. The same day I arrived at Damietta. The next day I went to Ahmed-Pacha-Behil, a creature of the grand vizier's; he returned my visit the same day. He conducted himself perfectly well to me during my stay in that city. On the 7th I went to visit the Fort of Lesbe, and the Towers of Bogaz. They have not continued the works of that fort, which is in a bad state: those of Bogaz are in a good condition. There is a garrison of 200 men in the fort and in the towers. On the 8th I received the visit of Hassan Toubar: his influence over the inhabitants of Mensale is still the same. On the 9th I went to Semenie, where I saw the cheik Ibrahim-El-Behlout, he who behaved so well to the French under the orders of general Vial, when they were taken and imprisoned. The first consul had exempted his village from all contributions. I saw all the cheiks at Damietta, particularly Ali Khasaki, whom the first consul had invested with a pelisse: he is possessed of great credit, and is much attached to the French. There are at Damietta two Christians, who are men of merit, and may be very useful to us: they are M. Bazile and Don Bazile. They are possessed of good information, have very considerable fortunes, and are very highly respected. In Egypt, chiefs, merchants, people, all like to talk of the first consul; all offer up prayers for his happiness. All the news which concerns him spread from Alexandria or Damietta to the Pyramids and the Grand Cataracts with astonishing rapidity. On the 14th the frigate arrived at Bogaz from Damietta: I immediately set out for Acre, at which place I arrived on the 19th.

The 20th of November, in the morning, I dispatched citizens Joubert and Legrange to Dgezzar-Pacha, with a letter in which I stated to him, that peace being concluded between France and the Porte, the relations of commerce should be re-established on the footing they stood before the war, and that I was charged by the first consul to confer with him on these objects. I begged of him to answer me in writing, if he was inclined to treat with me. In some hours the messengers returned Dgezzar had received them coldly. He expressed his desire to see me personally, but was unwilling to write. Every body advised me not to see him, without an assurance written by himself; but this he appeared unwilling to do: but notwithstanding this cautionary advice, and his obstinate refusal to write, I determined to repair myself immediately to Acre I, repaired to the house of the commissary of the Seven Isles. Very soon after, the Dragoman of the pacha, informed of my arrival, came to conduct me to the pacha, who received me in an apartment where he was unattended, and which was without any other furniture than a carpet. He had on one side of him a pistol with four barrels, a small air-gun, a sabre, and a hatchet. After inquiring as to my health, he asked me whether I was not persuaded that our end is pre-ordained in Heaven, and that nothing could change our destiny. I answered that I believed, as he did, in predestination. He continued to speak for some time on that subject. I perceived, however, that he affected a degree of simplicity; but that, at the same time, he wished to pass for a man of wit, as well as for a just man. He repeated several times, "It is said that Dgezzar is barbarous; this is false, he is but just and severe. Request of the first consul not to send me, as commissary of commercial relations, a lame or a blind man; because such a person would be sure to say, that Dgezzar had made him so." Soon after he said, "I desire that the commissary you may send shall reside at Seide, as that is the most commercial port in my dominions: beside it is not necessary he should reside here, where I shall be myself the French commissary, and shall take care that your countrymen be well received. I highly esteem the French. In stature Buonaparté is small, but he is nevertheless the greatest of mankind. I know that he is greatly regretted at Cairo, where they wish to see him again." I made a few observations on the peace between France and the Porte; to which he answered, "Do you know why I have thus received, and feel so much pleasure at seeing you? It is because you come unauthorized by a firman, and without any orders from the divan. I have the greatest contempt for its blind vizier. They say that Dgezzar is a Bosnian, a man of straw, and cruel to excess; but nevertheless, I can stand the ordeal. I was once poor. My father had nothing to bequeath me but courage. I have achieved my

Digitized by Google

own elevation by dint of exertion. This, however, does not make me proud, and Dgezzar, perhaps, will soon finish his career: not that he is old, as his enemies report, (he then performed some of the manœuvres of the Mamelukes, in their mode of rising their arms, &c. which he really executed with surprising adroitness and agility), but because most likely God will have it so. The king of France, once so powerful, has perished. Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest of all kings, was, when his time was come, killed by a fly, &c." He made several observations in this strain, and afterwards spoke of the motives which induced him to make war upon the French army; from the whole of his demeanor it could easily be seen, that he wished to be on good terms with the first consul, and that he stifled his resentments. The following is the apologue, which he used to demonstrate the causes of his resistance. "A black slave," he said, "after a long journey, in which he had suffered the greatest privations, arrived at a little field of sugar canes; he stopped therein, and indulged himself in partaking of the delicious liquor they afforded; and at length was determined to remain on the spot. Very soon afterwards two travellers, who had followed him, came up. The first said to him, Salamalle (the mode of wishing health). The devil take it, answered the black. The second traveller then approached, and inquired why he had answered in such a way to so good a wish. I had very good reason for it, replied he; if I had answered in a friendly manner, the man would have entered into conversation with me, and afterwards sat down beside me; he would have partaken of my refreshments, and finding them desirable, would have endeavoured to obtain exclusive possession." I recommended to the favourable attention of Dgezzar the Christians and the convents at Nazareth and Jerusalem: he assured me that he would treat them with much regard. I did not forget the Mutuales, and received the same assurance in their behalf. Dgezzar frequently observed to me, that his word was, with him more sacred than treaties. Our conversation was interrupted for some moments by a kind of military music, which he performed in a very agreeable style. The palace of Dgezzar is built with much taste and elegance; but in order to arrive at the apartments, a number of turnings are necessary. At the foot of the staircase, however, is situated a prison, the gate of which is allowed to be open from noon till evening. I saw a number of the unfortunate inhabitants. In the courts I observed twelve field pieces well mounted, and in admirable order. Never did I encounter a sight more hideous or repulsive than that of the minister of Dgezzar, whom I met in going out. The pacha had caused one of his eyes to be put out, and his nose and ears to be cut off. I saw in the town more than a hundred individuals in the same state. On beholding the domestics of Dgezzar, and even the inhabitants of Acre, one would imagine himself in the resorts of brigands ready to assassinate. This monster has imprinted the mark of his atrocious character upon every thing within the limits of his power. I had an opportunity of seeing, while at Acre, the procurateur of the propaganda, as well as that of the Holy-land. Of the former, and of the commissary of the Seven Isles, I collected some information concerning the present state of Syria, and the fortifications of Acre, of which I had seen but a part: I was not suffered to visit them. The procurateur of the Holy Land is grateful to the first consul for the protection he had afforded the monks. He assured me that my recommendation to Dgezzar would be very useful. He hinted to me Dgezzar's earnest wishes to be on good terms with the first consul. It is certain that the former behaved very well to the crew of a French vessel which put into Acre shortly before my arrival. Dgezzar occupies all Palestine, with the exception of Jaffa, where Aboumarak Pacha has been beseiged nearly five months, by a force of 9,000 men. This operation prevents Dgezzar from carrying on hostilities with the desired vigour against the emir of the Druses, who for the space of a year, had paid him no tribute. Tripoli is tranquil at present: it is different at Aleppo, whence the pacha has been driven. Damascus is in open rebellion against the Porte; not only has the pacha of the divan been expelled, but the aga, who commanded the citadel for the Turks, has been delivered up by the soldiers to the insurgents, who have decapitated him. Tripoli is now under a rebellious pacha, who is a creature of Dgezzar; who has lately ordered him to protect the pilgrims from Mecca. In a word, all Syria is with Dgezzar, and the Ottomans are as much detested here as in Egypt. The Mutuales live peaceably in their villages; they have, however, been obliged to retire from the borders of the sea. Aboumarak is now at the last extremity: this man is equally inconsiderate and cruel, and is surpassed only by Dgezzar. The Christians are even more in dread of them, and tremble for their future situation. The monks of the convent of Jaffa have withdrawn to Jerusalem. The 21st of November I quitted Acre. As the winds were unfavourable to a voyage to Jaffa, I set sail for Zante, where I arrived the 4th December. I landed the same day, but the ship's company were put under quarantine. I repaired to the house of the French commissary, escorted by the officers of health. I soon learned that the isle and the republic were split into different parties, and that even the tranquillity of the place was threatened. I assembled the members of the constituted authorities, and the principal persons of the town, at the house of the governor M. de Calishipode. After having represented to them the interest which the first consul took in their welfare, I induced them to lay aside that spirit of party which distracted them, and to wait with-

Digitized by Google

out passion, and in silence, the new constitution. These few words were received with enthusiasm, and all of them exclaimed, "France for ever! Buonaparté for ever!" These cries were reiterated on my going out by more than 4,000 men, who followed me to the door. The governor and the Russian commandant were alarmed at it; and I learned by the French commissary, on the following day, that two of the leading men were sent to prison, but that on his solicitations, and fearful of my reproaches, they were set at liberty in the course of the night. I went to the Conciergerie, and had the governor brought there. I spoke to him strongly on the irregularity of his conduct: he was alarmed, and promised that he would look upon those who cried out, "Live the first consul!" as good citizens, and should in future treat them as such. As he sent, in the course of the night, a courier to his government, and I had reason to believe he had made a wrong report, I immediately wrote to the charge d'affaires of the republic at Corfou, to inform him what had passed, and that I was setting off for Messina. I do not stray from the truth in assuring you, that the islands of the Ionian Sea will declare themselves French as soon as an opportunity shall offer itself.

English army in Egypt.—That army commanded by general Stuart, consists of 4,430 men; they wholly and exclusively occupy Alexandria and the neighbouring forts. The Turks, who formed the garrison of some of these forts, have been removed. Lately the English general has occupied Demanhour with 100 infantry, and 100 horse, under the pretext of curbing the Arabs. The English have made no necessary works for the maintenance of the forts; the palisades are almost entirely destroyed, and the branches occasioned by the rains have very much damaged all the new fortifications. They occupy none of the works which are beyond the line of the Arabs, and all the redoubts which existed at the departure of the French army are destroyed. The pacha of Cairo furnishes to the English army corn, rice, wood, and provisions, without any payment. The consumption is treble what it should be: they commit great waste. A great misunderstanding reigns between general Stuart and the pacha.

State of the Army.—Dillon's regiment; emigrants 450; British Chasseurs; emigrants 550; Role's regiment; Swiss, 600; Wetteville's regiment, Swiss 680: the 10th reg. of infantry English 600; the 61st reg. of infantry, English 650; the 88th reg. of infantry, English 400; dragoons of the 26th light, English 350; artillery English 150; total 4430.—The Turkish army.—Muhammed, pacha of Cairo, who has taken, it is not known why, the title of viceroy of Egypt, does not command the troops in person. Muhammed Aly-Serr-Chersme, who had the command since my arrival, was killed before Gaza; they are now under the orders of Jussef Kiahia. Tair is pacha of the Arnaoutes, who compose the greatest part of this army, amounting to about 16,000 men. They from time to time receive reinforcements. Chourchid-Amid, a pacha of two tails, is at Alexandria with 600 men, who occupy no fortification. This pacha is, as one may say, a prisoner with the English. The Turkish army consists of 7,640 men, and that of the Arnaoutes of 8,500, making a whole of 16,140. It is useless to add, that this is not an army: they are men ill armed, without discipline, without confidence in their chiefs, and enervated by excessive debauchery. The chiefs are in every thing like their soldiers; ignorant even of the first principles of the military art; and uniformly actuated by the love of wealth, they think of nothing but of obtaining it, and of finding the means of carrying it off in safety. Six thousand French would at present be enough to conquer Egypt.

Army of the Mamelukes.—The army of the beys is composed of 3,000 Mamelukes, of 3,500 Arabs of the tribe of Ababde of Chark, and of 3,500 of the tribe of Binialy. Muhammed Bey Elfy married the daughter of the cheik of the first, and Maarzouk Bey, son of Ibrahim Bey, the daughter of the cheik of the tribe of Binialy. The power in this army is divided between Ibraham Bey, who is the chief, Eley Bey, and Osman Bey, who has succeeded Murad Bey. Their head-quarters are at Djergé. They have eighty French deserters, which form a small corps of artillery. To the present time they have beat the Turks in every action, and the Egyptians prefer them to the Osmanlis. The whole of upper Egypt has submitted to them.

Syria.—Acre. The body of this place has been repaired; the port has been covered with a small horned work, and the tower of the angle by a half-moon. They have likewise made a small fleche, in front of the palace of the Pacha. All the works are well kept. The weakest part is that towards the sea, and particularly the point which defends the entrance of the port. The forces of Dgezzar are at present 13 or 14,000 men, of which 9,000 are employed at the siege of Jaffa. Jerusalem and Nazareth are occupied by the troops of the Pacha of Acre. The Naplonsains serve against Aboumarsk.—Jaffa. The vizier, after the taking of Egypt, caused the body of the place to be re-constructed, which is at present in a very good state. Aboumarak, pacha of Palestine, who defends this place, has a garrison of 4,000 men. Gaza is occupied by 400 troops of Aboumarak. The emir of the druses has refused to Dgezzar his annual contribution, and has raised a respectable armament. The pacha waits till the fall of Jaffa to attack him. The English wished to interfere as mediators between the emir and Dgezzar, but the last refused their mediation. The Port has, at this moment, little connexion with Syria.

(Signed) HORACE SEBASTIANI.

Digitized by Google

No. 2.—Acts of the Government. Decree of the Government of the 21st February.

The Government of the Republic decrees, that a View of the present situation of the republic shall be carried to the legislative body by the messengers of the government, and also the same be inserted in the bulletin of the laws. (Signed) BUONAPARTE, First Consul.

VIEW OF THE STATE OF THE REPUBLIC.

Events have neither frustrated the wishes nor disappointed the expectations of government. The legislative body, on resuming its labours, has the satisfaction of finding the republic strengthened by the union of its citizens, more active in its pursuits of industry, and more confident in its prospects of prosperity.

The execution of the Concordat, from which the enemies of public order still ventured to conceive criminal hopes, has almost every where produced the most beneficial effects. The principles of an enlightened religion, the voice of the sovereign pontiff, the firmness and perseverance of government, have triumphed over every obstacle. Mutual sacrifices have reunited the ministers of religion; enlightened reason and cordial unanimity have revived the Gallican church; and the happiest change has already manifested itself in the public morals. Every day produces a more perfect coincidence of opinion and of sentiment. Childhood is more docile to the instructions of parents, and youth more submissive to the authority of magistrates. The conscription goes on smoothly in those very places where the mere name of conscription was sufficient to stimulate insurrection, and to serve the country is now become a duty of religion.

In those departments which the first consul visited, he every where received pledges and observed proofs of a return to those principles which constitute the strength and the happiness of society.

In the departments of the Eure, the lower Seine, the Oise, the inhabitants proudly exult in the national glory. They are sensible to their full extent of the advantages of equality. They hail with blessings the restoration of peace; they receive with blessings the re-establishment of public worship. These are the ties that bind down every heart to the state and the constitution.

It is the duty of government to cherish and direct these auspicious dispositions.

Other forms of worship have been regularly organised. Consistories are formed of enlightened citizens, tried and acknowledged defenders of public order, of civil and religious liberty.

Public instruction, that indispensable support of society, is every where sought after with eagerness and alacrity. Several lyceums have already been opened; already, as government had well foreseen, a number of private schools aspire to the rank of the secondary schools. The whole body of citizens show their conviction that there can be no happiness without the light of education; that, without talents and information, there can be no equality but that of misery and servitude.

A military school is opened to receive the young defenders of the country. Soldiers, they will learn to support the life of camps, and endure the fatigues of war. By long habits of obedience they will be trained up to the art of commanding, and they will bring to the armies courage and discipline, united with talents and with knowledge.

In the lyceums, as well as in the military school, the youth of the departments newly incorporated with the republic, will live mingled without any distinction with the youth Old France. From this confusion of minds and manners, from this communication of habits and of dispositions, from this commixture of interests, of projects, and of hopes, will spring up that fraternity, which of several nations will make but one people, destined by their position, by their courage, and by their virtues, to form the centre of union, and the example of Europe.

The national institute, which has its ascendancy over public instruction, has received a more useful direction, and henceforward will exert a more active influence over the national character, over the language of the country, and over the arts, sciences, and literature.

In order to insure the stability of our infant institutions, in order to remove from the eyes of the public the spectre of discord which appeared to them in the periodical return of elections to the supreme magistracy, the friends of the country called for the consulate for life to be granted to the first magistrate. The people upon being consulted, answered to their call, and the senate proclaimed the will of the people.

The system of lists of eligibility could no resist the test of experience, and the force o public opinion.

The organisation of the senate was incomplete.

The national justice was left to be administered by tribunals without harmony, and without dependence on each other. There was no authority to protect or to reform them; no tie of restraint to subject them to one common discipline.

In fine, there was wanting to France a power to reclaim justice itself, the power of granting pardon. How often these twelve years past has that power been implored! How many unfortunates have fallen the victims of an inflexible sternness with which wise men reproached our laws? How many criminals have been acquitted through a false indulgence, because our punishments were too severe!

A *senatus-consultum* has restored to the

Digitized by Google

people the exercise of those rights which the constituent assembly had acknowledged; but it has restored them surrounded with precautions which preserve the people from errors or precipitation in their choice; with precautions which guard the influence of property, and the preponderance of enlightened talents.

Should the first magistracy become vacant, the duties and the proceedings of the senate are traced out for such an emergency: forms of certain operation guide the wisdom and the liberty of their choice; and the quick decision of that choice deprives ambition of the means of conspiring, and anarchy of the means of destroying.

The cement of time will every day consolidate, more and more, this tutelary institution. It will be not only the term of all disquietudes, and the object of all hopes, but likewise the fairest recompenses that can be held out to public services and public virtues.

Justice embraces all the tribunals with one common bond. They have each their subordinate station and their censor: they are always free in the exercise of their functions; always independent of power, but never independent of the laws.

The privilege of granting pardon when the interest of the republic requires it, or when circumstances prescribe indulgence, is entrusted to the hands of the first magistrate; but it is only confided to him under the guard of justice itself; he is to exercise it only under the eyes of a council, and after having consulted the severest oracles of the law.

If institutions be appreciated by their effects, never was any institution more important in its result than the organic *senatus-consultum*. From that moment the French people began to confide in their destiny; property began to resume its former value, and speculations of distant view to be multiplied; —until that moment every thing seemed to float in uncertainty. The present moment was cherished: the next was a subject of alarm, and the enemies of the country continued to cherish hopes. Since that moment they are reduced to impotence and to detestation.

The island of Elba has been ceded to France: that acquisition gives her a mild and industrious people; two fine ports, a productive and precious mine: but being separated from France, it could not be intimately united with any of her departments, or subjected to the regulations of a common administration. Principles have been made to bend to the necessity of circumstances; exceptions have been established for the island of Elba, which its position and the public interest prescribed.

The application of the sovereign, the will of the people, and the necessity of existing circumstances, had placed Piedmont under the power of France. Amidst the nations that surrounded it, with the elements that composed its population, Piedmont was unable to support either the weight of its own independence, or the expenses of a monarchy. United to France, it will reap the benefits of its security, and its greatness; its laborious and enlightened citizens will exert their industry and their talents in the bosom of the arts, and under the shade of peace.

Security and tranquillity prevail in the interior of France. The vigilance of the magistracy, the severity of justice, and a gendarmerie vigorously appointed, and directed by a commander grown grey in the career of honour, has every where impressed terror on the minds and the attempts of the brigands.

Private interest has raised itself to a sentiment of public interest. Citizens have not shrunk from attacking those whom they formerly dreaded, even when they were chained down at the foot of the tribunals of justice. Whole communes have taken up arms and destroyed the brigands. Foreigners envy the security of our public roads, and that public force, which, though often invisible, is always present, attend on their footsteps, and watch for their protection, without any necessity of imploring its aid.

During the course of a difficult year, amidst the exigences of a general scarcity, the poor looked with confidence to the care of government. They supported with courage the privations which necessity imposed; and they received with gratitude the succours which they were taught to expect.

The crime of forgery is no longer encouraged by the hope of impunity. The zeal of the tribunals appointed to prosecute and punish it, and the just severity of the laws, have at length checked the progress of an evil which threatened both the public treasure, and the fortunes of individuals.

Our cultivation daily improves, and defies the most boasted agricultural systems of Europe. In every department are to be found enlightened farmers, who afford both instruction and example.

Premiums have been held out for improving the breed of horses; and similar encouragements are proposed for the improvement of wool by the introduction of a foreign breed of sheep. Zealous administrators are every where occupied in tracing out and revealing the richness of our soil, and in disseminating the useful plans and the happy results which experience daily discovers.

Our manufactures multiply and receive new spirit and improvement. While they emulate each, they will soon, no doubt, become the rivals of the most renowned manufactures of foreign countries. Henceforth there will be nothing wanting to their prosperity but capitals less dearly purchased. But capitalists begin already to give up the hazardous speculations of stock-jobbing, and devote their attention to the improvement of land, and the pursuit of useful enterprises. More than twenty thousand workmen, who were dis-

Digitized by Google

persed throughout Europe, have been recalled by the attention and by the favours of government, and will soon be restored to our manufactures.

Among our manufactures there is one which is almost peculiar to France, which Colbert kindled up by his genius. It was buried under the ruins of Lyons: government has exerted all its endeavours to extricate it. Lyons is again restored to splendor and opulence; already do its manufactures impose a tribute on the luxury of Europe. But the principle of their success is to be found in the luxury of France itself; it is in the changefulness of our taste, and the mutability of our fashions, that foreign luxury must look for its aliment; it is it that gives motion and life to an immense population, who, without that encouragement, must lose itself in corruption and misery.

There will soon be at Compeigne, there will soon arise on the confines of La Vendée, a number of Prytanees, where our youth will be brought up in habits of industry, and instructed in the mechanical arts. From that source our dock-yards and our manufactures will one day draw inspectors to direct their labours.

Fourteen millions arising out of the barrier tax, and ten millions out of the extraordinaries, have been employed during the year 10 in improving the public roads, in keeping up the old communications. New communications have also been opened. The Simplon, Mount-Cenis, and Mount-Genevre, will soon open a triple and easy access to Italy—a high road will lead from Genoa to Marseilles—a road is chalked out from Saint Esprit to Gap—another from Rennes to Brest, through Pontivy. At Pontivy establishments are to be raised which will have a powerful influence over the public mind of the departments of which ci-devant Britanny was composed—a canal will introduce into it new sources of commerce and prosperity.

On the banks of the Rhine from Bingen to Coblentz, a necessary road is cut through inaccessible rocks. The neighbouring communes associate their labours to the sacrifices of the public treasury, and the people of the other bank, who ridiculed the folly of the enterprise, are astonished and confounded at the rapidity of the execution.

A great number of workmen are employed on the canal of Saint Quintin. The canal of Ourcq is opened, and soon will Paris people enjoy the benefit of its waters, and the salubrity and the embellishments which they promise. The canal intended to unite the navigation of the Seine and the Saone, of the Danube and the Rhine, is almost entirely finished as far as Dole; and the public treasury already receives in the increased price of wool, to which that canal opens the approach, a sum equal to that which it has furnished for the continuance of the work. The canals of Argues, Mortes, and the Rhone, the draining of the marshes of the Lower Charente are begun, and will open up new channels of commerce, and afford new lands for cultivation. Works are going forward for the reparation of the dykes of the isle of Cadsand, of Ostend, of the Cotes du Nord, and the re-establishment of the navigation of our rivers. This navigation is no longer given up solely to the labours and the cares of government. The owners of boats plying on these rivers have already felt that it was their patrimony, and they fix on themselves the taxes by which the works are to be kept in proper repair. On the ocean forts are erecting to cover the roads of the isle of Aix, and to protect the vessels of the republic. Every where funds are raised for the reparation and improvement of our ports. A new bason and locked sluices will terminate the harbour of Havre, and will form an excellent port for the commerce of La Manche. A company of pilots is formed to secure the safe navigation of l'Escaut, and to free foreign pilots from the danger to which an unknown navigation must expose them.

At Antwerp labours are begun which will have the effect of restoring to its commerce its ancient celebrity; and the government has in contemplation a plan for forming canals to unite the navigation of the Escaut, the Meuse, and the Rhine, to give to our docks those materials of wood which grows in our own soil, and to our manufactures a perfection which the manufacturers of other countries dispute with us on our own territory.

The islands of Martinique, Tobago, and St. Lucie, have been restored to us with all the elements of prosperity. Guadaloupe, reconquered and pacified, returns to cultivation. Guiana arises from a long protracted infancy, and assumes a flourishing appearance.

St. Domingo had submitted, and the author of its troubles was in France. Every thing announced the return of prosperity, but a cruel malady delivered it up to new miseries. At length the scourge which desolated our army has ceased its ravages. The forces which now are on the island, and those which will speedily arrive from our different ports, guarantee the prospect of its speedy return to peace and to commercial pursuits.

Vessels are setting sail for the isles of France and Reunion, and for India.

Our maritime commerce is seeking to renew its ancient connexions, to form new relations; and by these efforts it gains new strength. Already happy experience and wise encouragements have re-animated a spirit for engaging in the fishery which was long the patrimony of France. Commercial expeditions still more important are formed or projected for the West India colonies, the isle of France, and the East Indies.

Marseilles resumes in the Mediterranean its ancient ascendancy.

Chambers of commerce have been restored

Digitized by Google

in the cities where they formerly existed. New ones have been established in those places, which, by the extent of their operations and the importance of their manufactures, have appeared to deserve them. In these associations, formed by persons whose situation entitles them to the honour of choosing the members, the spirit as well as the science of commerce will revive. There its interests will be developed, inseparable from the interests of the state. The merchant will there learn to place, in preference to riches, the consideration which honours them, and before the enjoyments of a vain luxury, that wise economy which fixes the esteem of his fellow-citizens and the confidence of strangers.

Deputies, chosen from the different chambers, will discuss, in the presence of government, the interests of commerce and manufactures, and the laws and regulations which circumstances may require.

In our forces, by sea and land, instruction and the love of discipline are sedulously inculcated. Responsibility becomes more rigid in our military corps. An economical administration has succeeded to the dilapidating system of contracts. The soldier, better fed and better clothed, understands economy, and his savings, which he throws into the common stock, attach him to his standard as well as to his family.

Every branch of our finances becomes more productive. The collection of direct contribution is less rigorous with regard to the contributors. In the year 6 it was reckoned that about fifty millions were in the hands of the collectors of taxes, and payments were three or four years in arrear. At this moment the sum in the hands of the collectors is not above three millions, and the contributions are paid even before they are due.

All the rules which have been made, and all the plans of administration which have been formed, give a produce still increasing. The rules applicable to the registering of commercial transactions are productive to a degree which attests the rapid movements of capital and the multiplicity of business which is transacted.

In the midst of so many signs of prosperity, the excess of the direct contributions is still made a ground of complaint. The government has learnt from every one versed in the principles of taxation, that the surcharge consisted chiefly in the inequality of the mode in which the taxes were imposed. Measures have been taken, and are carrying into effect, to ascertain the real inequalities which exist in the different departments. In the course of the year 12, regular and simultaneous operations will have ascertained what is the relation which ought to exist betwixt the contributions of the different departments, and what in each department is the just rate of the land tax. The moment that a certain result has been fixed, the government will give orders for those alterations which justice requires. But in the course of this year, and without waiting for those results, it will propose an important diminution in the land tax. Innovations are still proposed in our financial system; but every change is an evil, if it cannot be satisfactorily demonstrated that certain advantage would result from it. The government will seek from time and from discussions, weighed with all possible care, the maturity of these projects which inexperience often hazards; which they support by those past examples, the memory of which has been almost effaced from the public mind, and on the financial doctrines of a nation which, by unnatural and exaggerated efforts, has broke through every measure of public contribution and expenditure.

With an increase of revenue which no one ventured to calculate, extraordinary circumstances have led to wants which it was impossible to foresee. It was necessary to reconquer two of our colonies, and to re-establish in all the power and the government of the mother country. It was necessary, by means sudden and too extended to admit of rigid economy, to procure subsistence for the capital and several of the departments. At least, however, the success of the government has been equal to its efforts, and after these vast exertions, resources remain henceforth to guarantee the capital against the return of want, and to disconcert the projects of monopoly.

In the methodized statement of the minister of finance will be found a general view of the annual contributions and the different branches of the public revenue, what was their amount during the last year, what prospect of amelioration existed; whether from the mode of administration or the progress of public prosperity; what have been in the different departments of the ministry, the elements of expenditure during the year 10; what are the sums still remaining to be paid for that and former years; what resources exist to cover them, whether arising from outstanding arrears of taxes, or from the extraordinary funds appropriated to pay off the debts contracted in these years, and which have not yet been exhausted; what is the actual amount of the public debt; what has been its increase, how it has been diminished by natural causes, and how its extinction has been affected by the sinking fund. In the account of the minister of the public treasury will be seen a statement of the receipts, the payments of the year 10; what belongs to the different branches of the revenue; what is chargeable in each year and on each part of the administration. The united accounts of the two ministers will form a complete table of our financial situation. The government hold up with equal satisfaction the picture which it presents to its friends and its detractors, to citizens and to foreigners. After authorizing the foreseen expense of the year

Digitized by Google

12, and appropriating the necessary revenue, objects of the greatest interest will occupy the attention of the legislative body. It is necessary to introduce a change into our system of coinage. The custom-house duties must be re-organized, so as more effectually to check the progress of contraband trade. It is at length essential to give to France that civil code so long promised and so long expected.

Above all, projects of laws have been formed under the observation of government, and matured in conferences where commissions from the council of state and the tribunate were animated only by the love of truth and regard for the public interest. The same sentiments, the same principles will guide the deliberation of the legislators, and secure to the republic the wisdom and the impartiality of the laws which are adopted.

On the continent, every thing offers us pledges of repose and tranquillity. The Italian republic, since the proceedings at Lyons, has been daily strengthening itself by the more intimate union of the people of whom it is composed. The happy harmony among the authorities by which it is governed, its internal administration, its military force, already give it the character and the attitude of a state long established; and if wisdom preserve them, they guarantee to it a destiny of uninterrupted prosperity. Liguira, placed under a mixed constitution, sees at its head, and in the bosom of its authorities, all those of its citizens, the most estimable for their virtues, by their illumination and their fortune. New shocks have convulsed the Helvetic republic. The government owed its support to neighbours, whose repose was essential to the repose of France, and it will use every exertion to ensure the success of its mediation, and with it the happiness of a people whose position, whose habits, and whose interests, make it the necessary ally of France. Batavia successively takes possession of the colonies which the peace restored to her. She will ever remember that France must ever be her most useful friend or her most destructive foe.

In Germany the last stipulations of the treaty of Luneville are carrying into effect. Prussia, Bavaria, all the secular princes who had possessions on the left bank of the Rhine, will obtain on the right bank suitable indemnities. The house of Austria finds in the bishopricks of Salzburgh, Aischtett, Trent, and Brixen, and the greatest part of Pau, more than it had lost in Tuscany. Thus, by the happy co-operation of France and Russia, all permanent interests are conciliated, and from the bosom of that tempest which seemed ready to overwhelm it, the Germanic empire, that empire so necessary to the equilibrium and the repose of Europe, rises more powerful, composed of elements more homogeneous, better combined and more adapted to the circumstances and opinions of the present age. A French ambassador is at Constantinople, charged with renewing and fortifying the ties which attach us to a power which seems to be threatened with destruction, but which it is our interest to sustain, and to support the foundations by which it is upheld. The British forces are still in Alexandria and Malta. The government had a fair right of complaint, but it has received intelligence that the vessels which are to convey them to Europe are already in the Mediterranean.

The government guarantees to the nation the peace of the continent, and it is permitted to entertain a hope of the continuance of maritime peace. This peace is the want, as well as the desire of all nations. For its preservation, the government will do every thing compatible with national honour, essentially connected with the strict execution of the treaties.

But in England, two parties maintain a contest for power. One of those parties has concluded peace, and appears desirous of maintaining it. The other has taken an oath of eternal hatred to France. Hence that fluctuation of opinion and of counsels which prevail. Hence that attitude, at the same time pacific and menacing.

While this contest of parties continue, measures of precaution are what the government is called upon to adopt. Five hundred thousand men ought to be, and shall be ready to undertake its defence, and avenge its injuries. Strange necessity which miserable passions impose on two nations, whom interest and inclination mutually prompt to the cultivation of peace. Whatever success intrigues may experience in London, no other people will be involved in new combination—the government says, with conscious pride, that England alone cannot maintain a struggle against France. But we have better hopes, and we believe that in the British cabinet nothing will be listened to but the counsels of wisdom and the voice of humanity. Yes, doubtless, the peace will daily be more consolidated. The relation of the two governments will assume that character of good-will which is suitable to their mutual interests. A happy repose will bury the recollection of the long calamities of a disastrous war, and France and England, rendering their happiness reciprocal, will deserve the gratitude of the whole world.

The First Consul (signed) BUONAPARTE.
By order of the First Consul,
The Secretary of State, H. B. MARET.

No. 3.—Letter from Citizen Talleyrand to Citizen Fauvelet at Dublin, dated Paris, 26 Brumaire, 10th year, (17th November 1802.)

I forward to you, citizen, a series of questions, concerning which I am desirous of having your answers. You will have the goodness to place them opposite the questions

Digitized by Google

on the same sheet of paper, doubled in two, similar to the one which I have the honour to send to you. I shall be obliged to you to send me this paper as soon as possible, without, however, suffering your too great haste to be prejudicial to your accuracy. If you are doubtful upon any point, you will have the goodness to mention it. You will probably find no difficulty in consulting with some well informed merchants, or clerks in the Custom house, who you think may have it in their power to give you some positive information, and you will declare the sources from whence you have drawn that information. You will not consider this business as forming a part of your official correspondence. You must not number it, but you must content yourself with putting at the top of it, as in the projet which I enclose to you, Private Correspondence.

CH. MAU. TALLEYRAND.

No. 4.—Private Correspondence. Questions.

1. What number of vessels have entered and cleared out of the ports within your district within each year from 1792 to 1801 inclusive?—2. What is their tonnage or their admeasurement in sea tons of 2,000 4 P. S.?—3. Under what flag do they navigate?—4. From whence they come?—5. Whither bound?—6. With what merchandize freighted?—7. What was the price of freight to the principal ports of Europe, each sea ton of 2,000 4 P. S.?—8. What French productions are most in request in the market of the town where you reside, as well as of the other considerable towns in your district?—9. What is the merchandize which can be exported to France with greater advantage from the said markets than from any other?—10. What are the course of exchange, and the current prices of merchandize from three months to three months from the year 1792 to 1801?—11. You are required to furnish a plan of the ports of your district, with a specification of the soundings for mooring vessels.—12. If no plan of the ports can be procured, you are to point out with what wind vessels can come in and go out, and what is the greatest draught of water with which vessels can enter therein deeply laden?—13. What are the principal commercial houses?—If the heads of these house are foreigners, you are to point out of what country they are; and in all cases you are to state with what countries they are principally connected, and what is their chief line of commerce.—14. What is the usual course of exchange?—15. Whether there is a public bank, and what is its organization?—16. Whether there are any insurance companies, public or private, and what are their customs and rules, and the prices of insurance, for European and long voyages?—17. In case there exists any other public establishment which relates to commerce, you are to give every possible detail concerning it, especially in whatever regards manufactures and fisheries.—18. You are to point out the relative conformity of weights and measures with those of France, ancient and modern, as soon as you shall have obtained practical and exact information on those points.—19. You are to add to all this the most extensive information, as well general as particular, which you may be able to obtain from authority, especially with regard to commerce, and particularly respecting false accounts of purchases and sales of different merchandizes, in order to ascertain the expenses, rights, and local customs, in cases of purchases and sales.—20. Whether there are any fairs in your district; what species of traffic is carried on there, and to what amount?

No. 5.—Translation, from the Hamburgh Correspondenten of March 30th, 1803. The following article is inserted by desire.

Paris, March 15.

For some months a war of newspapers and of the press has been kept up between France and England. This seemed merely the dying embers of an extinguished conflagration; the last consolation of a desperate party; the food of some low passions and a few hungry scribblers. The French government was far from attaching importance to such matters. Notwithstanding some difficulties in the complete execution of the treaty of Amiens, they still believed they might rely on the good faith of the British government, and directed their attention solely to the re-establishment of the colonies. Relying upon the sacredness of treaties, they securely dispersed the remains of the French naval force, which had been given a prey to the English fleet. In this situation, suddenly appeared a solemn message from the cabinet at St. James's, and informed all Europe that France was making considerable preparations in the ports of Holland and France; an address was voted by parliament, promising to the king of England such extraordinary means of defence as the security of the British empire and the honour of the three crowns might require.—From the sudden appearance of this message, people doubted whether it was the effect of treachery, of lunacy, or of weakness. Let any one cast his eye over the ports of France and Holland, where he will find only detached naval preparations destined for the colonies, and consisting only of one or two line-of-battle ships, and a few frigates. On the other hand, let him look at the ports of England, filled with a formidable naval force; on such a review one could be tempted to believe that the message of the king of England was mere irony, if such a farce were not unworthy the majesty of a government. If one considers the influence of factions in so free a country, one might suppose that the king of England had only had the weakness to yield, if weakness were compatible with the first quality of a king. In short, no rational

Digitized by Google

motives remain to which it can be ascribed, except bad faith—except a sworn enmity to the French nation—except perfidy, and the desire of openly breaking a solemn treaty, for the sake of advantages which will be maintained, and the sacrifice of which the honour of France and the faith of treaties forbid.—When a man reads this message he thinks himself transported to the times of those treaties which the Vandals made with the degenerate Romans, when force usurped the place of right, and when, with a hasty appeal to arms, they insulted the antagonist they meant to attack. In the present state of civilization, there is a respect which a great monarch, which a polished people owe to themselves, were that respect no more than to seek a plausible pretext for an unjust war. But in this instance every thing is precipitate, and repugnant to decency and to justice. An eternal war would succeed a dreadful contest, and the more unjust the attack, the more irreconcileable would be its animosity.—Such a novelty would doubtless excite the disapprobation of Europe. While even the English, whose national pride had not entirely blinded them, sighed at this prospect, did the Times call the peace of Amiens an armistice, and in doing so, passed the severest satire on the government it defended; and the rapid fall of the national funds is the first prelude to the misfortunes which may follow as the revenge due for the wound given to all social rights.—The French are less intimidated than irritated by the threats of England. They have neither been dispirited by their reverses, nor elated by their victories; in a war to which there appeared no termination, they saw all Europe confederated against them. Their constancy, their courage, and the prompt activity of their government, brought it to a conclusion. This war would have a different object; France would contend for the liberty of the states of Europe, and the sacredness of their treaties: and if the English government, be determined to make it a national war, perhaps her boasted formidable naval strength would not be sufficient to decide the result, and to secure the victory.—The French, strong in the justice of their cause, and the confidence they repose in their government do not dread the new expenses and new sacrifices which such a war might render necessary. Their system of finance is more simple and less artificial than that of London, and so much the more solid. It all lies in their soil and in their courage. On the first news of the English Message, all eyes were turned to the cabinet of the Thuilleries. As most trifling motions received a character of importance, its most unpremeditated words were eagerly caught up. Every one impatiently expected the assembly for the presentation of foreigners, which Madame Buonaparté holds once a month. Every one was prepared to draw some inference from it. It was as splendid as usual. The first consul made his appearance and said, on his entrance, to the English ambassador, who was standing beside M. Markoff, "We have been at war for twelve years. The king of England says that France is making immense naval preparations. He has been led into an error. In the French ports there are no preparations of any magnitude. The whole fleet is gone to St. Domingo and the colonies. With regard to the ports of Holland, to which the message likewise alludes, there are only the preparations for the expedition under general Victor, and all Europe knows its destination is for Louisiana. The king says farther, that between the cabinets of Paris and London differences continue. I know of none. It is true that England ought to have evacuated Malta, and Malta is not evacuated: and as his Britannic Majesty has bound himself by the most solemn treaty ever entered into, it is impossible to doubt of the speedy evacuation of that island: and," added the first consul, "those who would attempt to frighten the French people should know, that it is possible to kill, but not to intimidate them." —During the course of the evening, when the first consul happened to be near M. Markoff, he said to him, half aloud, "that the British minister wished to keep Malta for five years more. Such a proposal was insulting, and no treaties should be entered into, which it was not resolved to observe." At the conclusion of the assembly, when the English ambassador was about to retire, the first consul said to him, "Madame the duchess of Dorset has spent the unpleasant part of the year at Paris. It is my sincere wish that she may also spend the agreeable season. But if it should happen that we really must go to war, the responsibility is exclusively with those who deny the validity of their own contracts, since they refuse to observe treaties which they had concluded."—These words of the first consul require no comment. They explain completely his present opinions, his past conduct, and his resolution for the future. It is sufficient to compare them with the tergiversations, the duplicity, the evasions, and the message, of the English government, in order to be enabled to decide on the justice of the dispute.

No. 6.—Letter from Spiridion Foresti to Lord Hawkesbury, dated Corfu, Dec. 10th, 1802.

My Lord;—The last letters from my agent at Zante furnish me with the information that the Cornelia French frigate, having on board Horatio Sebastiani, chief of brigade, and charged with a public mission on the part of the first consul of the French republic, came to anchor there on the 3rd instant. The envoy finding that a vessel coming from Alexandria was subject to a long quarantine, and could not be permitted to communicate freely with the shore, applied to the delegate of that island for permission to land, which being

Digitized by Google

granted him, he was conducted to the delegate's apartment. He then requested that a meeting of the three orders might be called, which was also complied with, and twelve persons, four of each order, met in the delegate's house. The envoy Sebastiani then harangued them nearly in the terms of the address, which I have herewith the honour of inclosing to your lordship. His speech, however contained some additional observations, importing, that Buonaparté had been the first to break the chains of the islanders. When he had done speaking, a tumultuous cry was uttered, of "Viva la Liberta! Viva l'Uguaglianza."

Before his departure, however, he caused to be forwarded to the delegate of Cephalonia, and to the senate of Corfu, copies of the enclosed address, expressing a wish that it might be generally circulated among the people of each island. I have, &c.

(Signed) SPIRIDION FORESTI.

No. 7.— Letter from Spiridion Foresti to lord Hawkesbury, dated Corfu, Jan. 2th, 1803,

My Lord;—In my letter of the 10th ultimo, your lordship will perceive that I inserted the arrival of the Cornelia French frigate at Zante, and that Horatio Sebastiani harangued the people of that island. At that time I was not in possession of his exact oration, but since then the delegate of Zante transmitted the speech to the senate of Corfu; a copy of which I beg leave to submit to your lordship's attention. M. Romieu, the French minister here, communicated to the prince of the senate, that the first consul of the French republic had taken under his protection the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman churches of this republic; and on the 19th December wrote to the vicar general of Corfu to inform him of the same; a copy of which permit me to inclose for your perusal. From the proceedings of the French commissary here, and those of the other islands, together with the disposition of the natives, I am afraid that this republic will be a constant theatre of French intrigue. The aforesaid commissaries occasion count Mocenigo and this government an infinite deal of trouble. I have, &c.

(Signed) SPIRIDION FORESTI.

[First inclosure referred to in No. 7.]

Horace Sebastiani, Chief of Brigade of a regiment of Dragoons, and Envoy of the First Consul in the Levant.

To his Excellency the Delegate of Zante.

Sir;—The first consul Buonaparté has charged me to visit these islands which compose your republic, and to assure the inhabitants that he takes a lively interest in their prosperity. I know that the difference of political opinions divides this rising republic into various parties, and that without the wise measures taken by your government, its tranquillity will be destroyed. I could wish you to make known to your administrators and fellow citizens how much the first consul wishes to see a stop put to those intestine divisions which afflict these islands. Your political independency has been guaranteed by France, Russia, and the Sublime Porte. These powerful nations, united together by the bonds of the truest friendship, are occupied in concert with your most enlightened and most virtuous fellow citizens, to give you a form of government suitable to your situation and the genius of your inhabitants. Wait with confidence and moderation the result of these important operations, and be assured that you will see the end of your ills and the beginning of your prosperity. All exaggerations of political opinions are inimical to the general prosperity. Absolute democracy, always tempestuous, sacrifices to vain chimeras the security, the property, civil liberty, and in short all that constitutes the happiness of a state: aristocracy which is not moderated is always tyrannical, and the elevation of a small number of families is preferred to talents and to virtue. In order that a government may be prosperous, it is necessary that it should have in its formation a happy combination of the advantages of different forms of government; the power and promptitude of monarchy, the vigilance and intelligence of aristocracy, and the vigour and elevation of democracy; that the citizen may find the security enjoyed under the first, the tranquillity of the second, and the equality of rights fixed by the laws which are found in the third. Recollect that the man who forms a part of society only preserves the liberty of doing that which is not prejudicial to the rights of others; and that equality only consists in the exact execution of the laws, and in the protection which they afford to every member of the political body. As the quarantine prevents communication, I beg you will communicate this my letter to all the authorities, and also to the principal inhabitants. I avail myself, &c.

[Second inclosure referred to in No. 7.]

Translation.

Liberty. Equality.

Corfu, 29th Frimaire, 11th year of the French Republic.

The Adjutant Commandant Romieu, Commissary General of Commercial Relations, and Chargé d'Affaires to the Republic of the Seven Islands, to the Vicar General of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Churches at Corfu.

Mr. Vicar General;—I hasten to inform you, with the greatest joy, that I have just received the express orders of my government to place the church of the Roman religion in the republic of the Seven Islands under its special protection. I make this communication to the prince of the senate. This proof of the good will of the French towards this church, will be a powerful motive, Mr. Vicar

Digitized by Google

General, for addressing through the faithful in your communion, the most ardent vows to Heaven for the prosperity of the French republic, and the preservation of the lives of its consuls, in the same way as the Roman churches practise in the French republic. With the &c.

A. Roxizux.

DECLARATION.

His Majesty's earnest endeavours for the preservation of peace having failed of success, he entertains the fullest confidence that he shall receive the same support from his parliament, and that the same zeal and spirit will be manifested by his people, which he has experienced on every occasion when the honour of his crown has been attacked, or the essential interests of his dominions have been endangered.

During the whole course of the negotiations which led to the preliminary and definitive treaties of peace between his majesty and the French republic, it was his majesty's sincere desire, not only to put an end to the hostilities which subsisted between the two countries, but to adopt such measures, and to concur in such propositions, as might most effectually contribute to consolidate the general tranquillity of Europe. The same motives by which his majesty was actuated during the negotiations for peace, have since invariably governed his conduct. As soon as the treaty of Amiens was concluded, his majesty's courts were open to the people of France for every purpose of legal redress; all sequestrations were taken off their property; all prohibitions on their trade which had been imposed during the war were removed, and they were placed, in every respect, on the same footing with regard to commerce and intercourse, as the inhabitants of any other state in amity with his majesty, with which there existed no treaty of commerce.

To a system of conduct thus open, liberal, and friendly, the proceedings of the French government afford the most striking contrast. The prohibitions which had been placed on the commerce of his majesty's subjects during the war have been enforced with increased strictness and severity; violence has been offered in several instances to their vessels and their property; and, in no case, has justice been afforded to those who may have been aggrieved in consequence of such acts, nor has any satisfactory answer been given to the repeated representations made by his majesty's ministers or ambassador at Paris. Under such circumstances, when his majesty's subjects were not suffered to enjoy the common advantages of peace within the territories of the French republic, and the countries dependent upon it, the French government had recourse to the extraordinary measure of sending over to this country a number of persons for the professed purpose of residing in the most considerable sea-port towns of Great Britain and Ireland, in the character of commercial agents or consuls. These persons could have no pretensions to be acknowledged in that character, as the right of being so acknowledged, as well as all the privileges attached to such a situation, could only be derived from a commercial treaty; and as no treaty of that description was in existence between his majesty and the French republic.

There was consequently too much reason to suppose, that the real object of their mission was by no means of a commercial nature, and this suspicion was confirmed, not only by the circumstance that some of them were military men, but by the actual discovery that several of them were furnished with instructions to obtain the soundings of the harbours, and to procure military surveys of the places where it was intended they should reside. His majesty felt it to be his duty to prevent their departure to their respective places of destination, and represented to the French government the necessity of withdrawing them; and it cannot be denied that the circumstances under which they were sent, and the instructions which were given to them, ought to be considered as decisive indications of the dispositions and intentions of the government by whom they were employed.

The conduct of the French government, with respect to the commercial intercourse between the two countries, must therefore be considered as ill suited to a state of peace, and their proceedings in their more general political relations, as well as in those which immediately concern his majesty's dominions, appear to have been altogether inconsistent with every principle of good-faith, moderation, and justice. His majesty had entertained hopes, in consequence of the repeated assurances and professions of the French government, that they might have been induced to adopt a system of policy which, if it had not inspired other powers with confidence, might at least have allayed their jealousies. If the French government had really appeared to be actuated by a due attention to such a system; if their dispositions had proved to be essentially pacific, allowances would have been made for the situation in which a new government must be placed after so dreadful and extensive a convulsion as that which has been produced by the French revolution. But his majesty has unfortunately had too much reason to observe and to lament that the system of violence, aggression, and aggrandizement, which characterized the proceedings of the different governments of France during the war, has been continued with as little disguise since its termination. They have continued to keep a French army in Holland against the will, and in defiance of the remonstrances of the Batavian government, and in repugnance to the letter of three solemn treaties. They have in a pe-

Digitized by Google

riod of peace, invaded the territory, and violated the independence of the Swiss nation, in defiance of the treaty of Luneville, which had stipulated the independence of their territory, and the right of the inhabitants to choose their own form of government. They have annexed to the dominions of France, Piedmont, Parma, and Placentia, and the island of Elba, without allotting any provision to the king of Sardinia, whom they have despoiled of the most valuable part of his territory, though they were bound, by a solemn engagement to the emperor of Russia, to attend to his interests and to provide for his establishment. It may, indeed, with truth be asserted, that the period which has elapsed since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, has been marked with one continued series of aggression, violence, and insult, on the part of the French government.

In the month of October last, his majesty was induced, in consequence of the earnest solicitation of the Swiss nation, to make an effort, by a representation to the French government, to avert the evils which were then impending over that country. This representation was couched in the most temperate terms; and measures were taken by his majesty for ascertaining, under the circumstances which then existed, the real situation and wishes of the Swiss cantons, as well as the sentiments of the other cabinets of Europe. His majesty learned, however, with the utmost regret, that no disposition to counteract these repeated infractions of treaties and acts of violence, was manifested by any of the powers most immediately interested in preventing them; and his majesty therefore felt that, with respect to these objects, his single efforts could not be expected to produce any considerable advantage to those in whose favour they might be exerted.

It was about this time that the French government first distinctly advanced the principle, that his majesty had no right to complain of the conduct, or to interfere with the proceedings, of France, on any point which did not form a part of the stipulations of the treaty of Amiens. That treaty was unquestionably founded upon the same principle as every other antecedent treaty or convention, on the assumption of the state of possession and of engagements subsisting at the time of its conclusion; and if that state of possession and of engagements is materially affected by the voluntary act of any of the parties, so as to prejudice the condition on which the other party has entered into the contract, the change, so made, may be considered as operating virtually as a breach of the treaty itself, and as giving the party aggrieved a right to demand satisfaction or compensation for any substantial difference which such acts may have effected in their relative situations; but whatever may be the principle on which the treaty is to be considered as founded, there is indisputably a *general law of nations*, which, though liable to be limited, explained, or restrained by *conventional law*, is antecedent to it, and is that law or rule of conduct to which all sovereigns and states have been accustomed to appeal, where conventional law is admitted to have been silent. The treaty of Amiens, and every other treaty, in providing for the objects to which it is particularly directed, does not therefore assume or imply an indifference to all other objects which are not specified in its stipulations, much less does it adjudge them to be of a nature to be left to the will and caprice of the violent and the powerful. The justice of the cause is alone a sufficient ground to warrant the interposition of any of the powers of Europe in the differences which may arise between other states, and the application and extent of that just interposition is to be determined solely by considerations of prudence. These principles can admit of no dispute; but if the new and extraordinary pretension advanced by the French government, to exclude his majesty from any right to interfere with respect to the concerns of other powers, unless they made a specific part of the stipulations of the treaty of Amiens, was that which it was possible to maintain, those powers would have a right, at least, to claim the benefit of this principle, in every case of difference between the two countries. The indignation of all Europe must surely then be excited by the declarations of the French government, that, in the event of hostilities, these very powers who were no parties to the treaty of Amiens, and who were not allowed to derive any advantage from the remonstrances of his majesty in their behalf, are nevertheless to be made the victims of a war which is alleged to arise out of the same treaty, and are to be sacrificed in a contest which they not only have not occasioned, but which they have had no means whatever of preventing.

His majesty judged it most expedient, under the circumstances which then affected Europe, to abstain from a recurrence to hostilities on account of the views of ambition and acts of aggression manifested by France on the continent; yet an experience of the character and dispositions of the French government could not fail to impress his majesty with a sense of the necessity of increased vigilance in guarding the rights and dignity of his crown, and in protecting the interests of his people.

Whilst his majesty was actuated by these sentiments, he was called upon by the French government to evacuate the island of Malta. His majesty had manifested, from the moment of the signature of the definitive treaty, an anxious disposition to carry into full effect the stipulations of the treaty of Amiens relative to that island. As soon as he was informed that an election of a grand master had taken place, under the auspices of the emperor of Russia, and that it had been agreed by the different priories assembled at St.

Digitized by Google

Petersburgh to acknowledge the person whom the court of Rome should select out of those who had been named by them to be grand master of the order of St. John, his majesty proposed to the French government, for the purpose of avoiding any difficulties which might arise in the execution of the arrangement, to acknowledge that election to be valid. And when in the month of August, the French government applied to his majesty to permit the Neapolitan troops to be sent to the island of Malta, as a preliminary measure for preventing any unnecessary delay, his majesty consented without hesitation to this proposal, and gave directions for the admission of the Neapolitan troops into the island. His majesty had thus shown his disposition not only to throw no obstacle in the way of the execution of the treaty, but on the contrary, to facilitate the execution of it by every means in his power. His majesty cannot, however, admit that at any period since the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens the French government have had a right to call upon him, in conformity to the stipulations of that treaty, to withdraw his forces from the island of Malta. At the time when this demand was made by the French government, several of the most important stipulations of the arrangement respecting Malta remained unexecuted: the election of a grand master had not been carried into effect. The tenth article had stipulated that the independence of the island should be placed under the guarantee and protection of Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia, Spain, and Prussia. The emperor of Germany had acceded to the guarantee, but only on condition of a like accession on the part of the other powers specified in the article. The emperor of Russia had refused his accession, except on the condition that the Maltese langue should be abrogated; and the king of Prussia had given no answer whatever to the application which had been made to him to accede to the arrangement. But the fundamental principle, upon the existence of which depended the execution of the other parts of the article, had been defeated by the changes which had taken place in the constitution of the order since the conclusion of the treaty of peace. It was to the order of St. John of Jerusalem that his majesty was, by the first stipulation of the tenth article, bound to restore the island of Malta. The order is defined to consist of those languages which were in existence at the time of the conclusion of the treaty: the three French langues having been abolished, and a Maltese langue added to the institution. The order consisted, therefore, at that time, of the following langues, viz. the langues of Arragon, Castile, Germany, Bavaria, and Russia. Since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, the langues of Arragon and Castile have been separated from the order by Spain, a part of the Italian langue has been abolished by the annexation of Piedmont and Parma to France. There is strong reason to believe that it has been in contemplation to sequestrate the property of the Bavarian langue, and the intention has been avowed of keeping the Russian langues within the dominions of the emperor.

Under these circumstances the order of St. John cannot now be considered as that body to which, according to the stipulations of the treaty, the island was to be restored; and the funds indispensably necessary for its support, and for the maintenance of the independence of the island, have been nearly, if not wholly, sequestered. Even if this had arisen from circumstances which it was not in the power of any of the contracting parties to the treaty to control, his majesty would nevertheless have had a right to defer the evacuation of the island by his forces, until such time as an equivalent arrangement had been concluded for the preservation of the independence of the order and of the island. But if these changes have taken place in consequence of any acts of the other parties to the treaty; if the French government shall appear to have proceeded upon a system of rendering the order whose independence they had stipulated, incapable of maintaining that independance, his majesty's right to continue in the occupation of the island under such circumstances, will hardly be contested. It is indisputable that the revenues of the two Spanish langues have been withdrawn from the order by his Catholic majesty; a part of the Italian langue has in fact been abolished by France, through the unjust annexation of Piedmont, and Parma, and Placentia, to the French territory. The elector of Bavaria has been instigated by the French government to sequestrate the property of the order within his territories; and it is certain that they have not only sanctioned but encouraged the idea of the propriety of separating the Russian langues from the remainder of the order.

As the conduct of the governments of France and Spain have, therefore, in some instances directly, and in others indirectly, contributed to the changes which have taken place in the order, and thus destroyed its means of supporting its independence, it is to those governments, and not to his majesty, that the non-execution of the tenth article of the treaty of Amiens must be ascribed.

Such would be the just conclusion if the tenth article of that treaty were considered as an arrangement by itself. It must be observed, however, that this article forms a part only of a treaty of peace, the whole of which is connected together, and the stipulations of which must, upon a principle common to all treaties, be construed as having a reference to each other.

His majesty was induced by the treaty of peace, to consent to abandon, and to restore to the order of St. John the island of Malta, on condition of its independance and neutrality. But a further condition which must ne-

Digitized by Google

cessarily be supposed to have had considerable influence with his majesty in inducing him to make so important a concession was the acquiescence of the French government in an arrangement for the security of the Levant, by the eighth and ninth articles in the treaty, stipulating the integrity of the Turkish empire, and the independence of the Ionian islands. His majesty has, however, since learnt, that the French government have entertained views hostile to both these objects; and that they have even suggested the idea of a partition of the Turkish empire. These views must now be manifest to all the world, from the official publication of the report of colonel Sebastiani; from the conduct of that officer, and of the other French agents in Egypt, Syria, and the Ionian islands, and *from the distinct admission of the first consul himself, in his communication with lord Whitworth.* His majesty was, therefore, warranted in considering it to be the determination of the French government, to violate those articles of the treaty of peace, which stipulated for the integrity and independence of the Turkish empire, and of the Ionian islands, and consequently he would not have been justified in evacuating the island of Malta, without receiving some other security, which might equally provide for these important objects. His majesty accordingly feels that he has an incontestible claim, in consequence of the conduct of France since the treaty of peace, and with reference to the objects which made part of the stipulations of that treaty, to refuse, under the present circumstances, to relinquish the possession of the island of Malta.

Yet notwithstanding this right so clear and so unquestionable, the alternative presented by the French government to his majesty, in language the most peremptory and menacing, was the *evacuation of Malta, or the renewal of war.*

If the views of ambition and aggrandizement, which have thus been manifested by the French government since the conclusion of the treaty of peace, have in so very particular a manner attracted the attention of his majesty, it has been equally impossible for him not to feel, and not to notice, the repeated indignities which have been offered by that government to his crown, and to his people.

The report of colonel Sebastiani contains the most unwarrantable insinuations and charges against his majesty's government, against the officer who commanded his forces in Egypt, and against the British army in that quarter. This paper cannot be considered as the publication of a private individual; it has been avowed, and indeed bears evidence upon the face of it, that it is the official report of an acredited agent, published by the authority of the government to which it was addressed, who thereby have given it their express sanction.

This report had been published a very short time, when another indignity was offered to this country in the communication of the first consul of France to the legislative body. In this communication he presumes to affirm, in the character of chief magistrate of that country, "*That Great Britain cannot singly contend against the power of France;*" an assertion as unfounded as it is indecent, disproved by the events of many wars, and by none more than by those of the war which has been recently concluded. Such an assertion, advanced in the most solemn official act of a government, and thereby meant to be avowed to all the powers of Europe, can be considered in no other light than as a defiance publicly offered to his majesty, and to a brave and powerful people, who are both willing and able to defend his just rights, and those of their country, against every insult and aggression.

The conduct of the first consul to his majesty's ambassador at his audience, in presence of the ministers of most of the sovereigns and states of Europe, furnishes another instance of provocation on the part of the French government which it would be improper not to notice on the present occasion, and the subsequent explanation of this transaction may be considered as having the effect of aggravating instead of palliating the affront.

At the very time when his majesty was demanding satisfaction and explanation on some of the points above mentioned, the French minister at Hamburgh endeavoured to obtain the insertion in a Hamburgh paper of a most gross and opprobrious libel against his majesty, and when difficulties were made respecting the insertion of it, he availed himself of his *official character of minister of the French republic* to require the publication of it by order of his government in the gazette of the senate of that town. With this requisition so made, the senate of Hamburgh were induced to comply; and thus has the independence of that town been violated, and a free state made the instrument, by the menace of the French government, of propagating throughout Europe, upon their authority, the most offensive and unfounded calumnies against his majesty and his government. His majesty might add to this list of indignities, the requisition which the French government have repeatedly urged, that the laws and constitution of his country should be changed relative to the liberty of the press. His majesty might likewise add the calls which the French government have on several occasions made upon him to violate the laws of hospitality with respect to persons who had found an asylum within his dominions, and against whose conduct no charge whatever has at any time been substantiated. It is impossible to reflect on these different proceedings, and the course which the French government have thought proper to adopt

Digitized by Google

respecting them, without the thorough conviction that they are not the effect of accident; but that they form a part of a system which has been adopted for the purpose of degrading, vilifying, and insulting his majesty and his government.

Under all these insults and provocations, his majesty, not without a due sense of his dignity, has proceeded with every degree of temper and moderation to obtain satisfaction and redress, while he has neglected no means, consistent with his honour and the safety of his dominions, to induce the government of France to concede to him, what is, in his judgment, absolutely necessary for the future tranquillity of Europe. His efforts in this respect have proved abortive, and he has therefore judged it necessary to order his ambassador to leave Paris. In having recourse to this proceeding, it has been his majesty's object to put an end to the fruitless discussions which have too long subsisted between the two governments, and to close a period of suspense peculiarly injurious to the subjects of his majesty.

But though the provocations which his majesty has received might entitle him to larger claims than those which he has advanced, yet anxious to prevent calamities which might thus be extended to every part of Europe, he is still willing, as far as is consistent with his own honour, and the interests of his people, to afford every facility to any just and honourable arrangement, by which such evils may be averted. He has, therefore, no difficulty in declaring to all Europe, that notwithstanding all the changes which have taken place since the treaty of peace, notwithstanding the extension of the power of France, in repugnance to that treaty, and to the spirit of peace itself, his majesty will not avail himself of these circumstances, to demand in compensation all that he is entitled to require, but will be ready to concur, even now, in an arrangement by which satisfaction shall be given to him, for the indignities which have been offered to his crown and to his people, and substantial security afforded against further encroachments on the part of France.

His majesty has thus distinctly and unreservedly stated the reasons of those proceedings to which he has found himself compelled to resort. He is actuated by no disposition to interfere in the internal concerns of any other state; by no projects of conquest and aggrandizement; but solely by a sense of what is due to the honour of his crown, and the interests of his people, and by an anxious desire to obstruct the further progress of a system which, if not resisted, may prove fatal to every part of the civilized world.

Westminster, May 18th, 1803.

Debate in the Commons on the King's Message relative to the Discussions with France.] May 23. This day there was a very animated debate on the motion of lord Hawkesbury for an Address to his Majesty on his Message relative to the termination of the Discussions with France. The public curiosity was so great, that the strangers gallery was filled at an early hour, by persons admitted in an unusual manner; in consequence of which, none of the gentlemen accustomed to report the parliamentary proceedings, could gain admission: a very imperfect sketch is all, therefore, that has been preserved of the very interesting discussion which took place on the first day's debate.—The House, according to order, proceeded to take into consideration his majesty's message of Monday last. And the same being read by the Speaker, the House was moved, "That the entry in the Journal of the House, of the 14th of May 1802, of the Address agreed to by this House, to be presented to his Majesty, respecting the Definitive Treaty of Peace, might be read." And the same being read accordingly,

Lord *Hawkesbury* opened the discussion with a general recapitulation of those topics which are recounted in his majesty's Declaration. He appeared throughout strongly impressed with the statements he was making; and his appeal to the House for unanimity and support, in the present urgent circumstances, was particularly powerful and affecting. He concluded with moving,

"That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, to return his majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious Message, and for the communication of the several Papers which have been laid before it in obedience to his majesty's command:—To assure his majesty of the just sense we entertain of his majesty's anxious and uniform endeavours to preserve to his people the blessings of peace, and of our perfect confidence in his majesty's disposition to terminate the calamities of war, whenever that object can be accomplished, consistently with the honour of his majesty's crown, and the interests of his people:—That we have observed, with the strongest feelings of indignation, that his majesty's endeavours have been frustrated by that restless spirit of ambition and domination by which the government of France have been led to advance pretensions the most extravagant and injurious, and to avow designs at once inconsistent with the obligations of good

Digitized by Google

faith, and with the essential interests of the British empire; and that for these indignities and provocations, his majesty has in vain demanded satisfaction and redress:—That, actuated by these sentiments, we feel that the trust reposed in us by a brave and loyal people, requires, on our part, a firm determination to co-operate with his majesty in calling forth the resources of the United Kingdom for the vigorous support of a cause in which are involved the dignity of his majesty's crown, the rights and liberties of his people, and all that is dear and valuable to us as a free and independent nation."

Mr. *Erskine* warmly expressed his sense of the hostile disposition and proceedings of France. To some parts of the conduct of ministers in the negotiation, and of the Address, he urged objections; but he assured them of his readiness to contribute, at all times, and by every method in his power, toward an effectual resistance of all aggression, either upon the dominion, the interests, or the honour of the country.

Mr. *Pitt* began by observing upon some passages of Mr. Erskine's speech, the tendency of which he professed not entirely to understand, but from which he was led to hope that the learned gentleman, and those with whom he usually acted, were not likely materially to object to the proposed address. He flattered himself that this was likely to be the case, because, whatever difference of sentiment might arise, and much was certainly to be expected, on many points included in the great mass of information contained in the papers on the table, yet upon the great and important question at issue between this country and France, and upon the justice and necessity of the grounds on which we were compelled to enter into the war, he thought it almost impossible that the House should not be unanimous. In those transactions which had most immediately produced our present situation, the learned gentleman himself appeared, notwithstanding some doubts which he had thrown out on particular points, to admit, upon the whole, that there was such clear evidence of views of aggression and hostility on the part of France, as justified this country in retaining Malta for its own security. This he maintained to be the first great point on which the question turned; and he contended, that the whole of Sebastiani's report, and the circumstances of his mission to Egypt, the express and deliberate avowal by Buonaparté himself of his views and intentions, in a formal conference with lord Whitworth, and the information of the same intentions through the official channel of the minister for foreign affairs, afforded the most indisputable evidence, that the first consul had formed the determination, even while Malta was yet in our hands, of resuming his hostile project against Egypt; that the pursuit of such a project was an undeniable act of hostility against this country, and aimed at some of its most important interests; that it was, besides, a direct violation both of the letter and spirit of the treaty of Amiens itself, under pretence of which treaty alone our evacuation of that island was demanded, though under circumstances which, in other respects, according to the letter of that treaty, did not authorize such a demand; that the disclosure of this hostile project clearly justified this country in requiring fresh security against it, and if such security was refused, in having recourse to arms for that purpose, at the moment which appeared to be most for our advantage.

He then more particularly commented on each of these several circumstances with respect to the report of Sebastiani. He stated, that that was evidently an official paper addressed to the government, by a persen regularly commissioned and employed by the consul himself; that its contents could never have been published in France but by his consent, and that they were published in fact in the official paper, under the direct authority of the government; that the whole tenor of that paper, and the account thus given by Sebastiani himself of his couduct in Egypt, made it impossible to doubt that he was sent there to prepare for the execution of a fresh attempt to put that country under the dominion of France; but that it was not necessary to dwell on the particular contents of the report; the mere circumstance of a military man having been sent at that time with such a commission to Egypt, was a sufficient evidence of the object of his mission. The time, he remarked, was very material, because it at once destroyed the chief pretext under which the French government had attempted, in the course of the official correspondence, to justify or extenuate the publication, or to deny the conclusion to be drawn from it. This pretext was, that the honour of the chief consul had been wounded by a narrative

Digitized by Google

of the expedition to Egypt, published by a respectable officer in the British army (sir Robert Wilson), and that the publication of Sebastiani's report became necessary for his vindication. The facts stated in that narrative, he observed, were not even contradicted by the report, but even if they had been, in what degree would that circumstance account for originally sending Sebastiani to Egypt, with such a commission as had been already stated? It appeared, that that officer had actually embarked from Toulon on the 16th of September, and after proceeding to Tripoli, had arrived at Alexandria on the 16th of October; whereas, it is notorious that, at that time, sir Robert Wilson's narrative had not been published. With respect to the avowal of his design by the first consul himself, he referred to lord Whitworth's account in his dispatch of the 21st of February. He observed, that so far from the conversation appearing, as some persons had imagined, only loose and desultory, it was one which took place by the express appointment of the first consul—that it was therefore evidently prepared and deliberate, and that it was actually opened by the first consul himself, as being the mode which he had adopted for the purpose "of conveying to his majesty, in the most clear and authentic manner," his sentiments on points which must be brought to an issue. In the course of this conversation, the first consul did not attempt to disguise his ultimate views upon Egypt, and though he professed to disclaim any intention of seizing it at present, he assigned as the reason for his forbearance, "that sooner or later it would belong to France, either by the falling to pieces of the Turkish empire, or by some arrangement with the Porte." That in a subsequent conversation with M. Talleyrand, it was expressly admitted, that the acquisition of Egypt had been, and still was, a favourite object of the first consul, but he at the same time endeavoured to convince his majesty's ambassador, that it was not so great an object as to allow him to go to war for its attainment; and yet, upon being pressed to explain what security it was intended to give, to remove apprehension on this point, for which he had before stated there was a project in contemplation, he referred only to a passage in the first consul's message to the legislative body, saying that "there is a French ambassador at Constantinople, who is charged to give every assurance of the disposition of France to strengthen instead of weakening the Turkish government."

To all the evidence founded on these several documents, he had heard but one argument opposed — the improbability of the French government thus disclosing its views, if it really entertained them. On this point it might be sufficient to observe, that it might indeed be difficult to account for such a disclosure, even on the supposition of such a project being really intended; but that it was not only difficult, but impossible to account for it at all, on the supposition of its not being intended. He asked whether, on the latter supposition, any motive could be assigned, either for the mission having been sent, or the report having been made and published, or for the avowals contained in the conversations of the first consul and of M. Talleyrand. He thought, however, that the difficulty of accounting for the disclosure was removed, by referring to the new and peculiar policy which had marked the conduct of France on many extraordinary occasions, from the very beginning of the Revolution; that where any measure was in contemplation more flagrant and atrocious than another, and more likely to shock the generel feelings of Europe, and perhaps to excite vigorous and united resistance, instead of carefully concealing it till the moment of execution, it had, on the contrary, been studiously announced beforehand; that the object of this policy had been gradually to familiarize men's minds to that which at first they could scarcely even believe, and that their schemes which, in the first instance, were received with horror, and would have been opposed with indignation, came afterwards to be contemplated with neglect and indifference; and that which at first no man thought it possible seriously to attempt, was by degrees considered as natural and probable, and, in the end, as that which it was hopeless and impossible to resist. He therefore put it to the House, whether, after having observed this practice, it was possible for us to be so credulous and childish, as to act on the belief that Buonaparté would abandon the projects he had formed, only because he had himself told us he would persist in them; and whether we thought that if, for whatever reason, he had been led prematurely to disclose this project, even while Malta, the great security against its execution, was still in our possession, he

Digitized by Google

would renounce the attempt when that security had been surrendered by us, and put, in fact, into his possession? If, then, the design against Egypt was apparent, he desired the House to consider, whether, upon every principle of justice and self-defence, admitted by all the systems of the law of nations, and adopted by the practice of all countries, we had not the clear right to take, from this moment, such measures of prevention and security as were sufficient to guard against the danger to which we should be in consequence exposed — whether it was not admitted, on almost all hands, that our possession of Malta was essential, or at least in the highest degree material, for the defence of Egypt — whether the importance of Egypt to this country was not in itself sufficiently evident, from its connexion with the safety of our Indian possessions—and whether it might not at this day be considered as a point of our national policy, already decided and attested by the glorious efforts which had been made, and the heroic blood which had been shed in the lest war for recovering it from France, and which had in a manner consecrated it in the hearts and affections of Englishmen? He therefore wished the House to consider what was to be our future conduct, if, after all the warnings given us, we were now to surrender Malta out of our hands, and the attack upon Egypt were to follow in six or in twelve months afterwards. Were we prepared for the ridiculous, but disastrous alternative to which we should be reduced, of either submitting without a struggle to national calamity and disgrace, because, foreseeing our danger, we had voluntarily and wantonly sacrificed the best means of averting it; or, when it was perhaps too late to enter upon a difficult and almost hopeless contest, having by our own act given up the arms by which we could be enabled to conduct it to a successful issue?

If the question were closed here, for the reason he had given, he was prepared to maintain, that on these grounds alone the war was both just and necessary, and such as ought to call forth the utmost exertions of parliament and the nation in its support. But so far was it from being the case, that there was not any one of the leading transactions subsequent to the treaty of Amiens, to which his majesty's declaration referred, which was not, in his opinion, as far as justice was concerned, a clear and evident cause of war, and such as would have been acted upon, if there were sufficient means of co-operation on the continent, in almost every period of the history of this country. He here referred to the annexation of Piedmont, as the first act by which the French government had proceeded, subsequent to the treaty, to pursue the same system of aggrandizement, which had appeared in all their previous conduct, and which it was vainly hoped they had relinquished. He referred also to the transaction respecting the German indemnities, where the French government, with an arrogance, he believed unprecedented in the history of Europe, had presumed to dictate to all Germany the detailed mode of arranging those indemnities, on which the diet of the empire was expressly convened to deliberate, pursuant to the treaty of Luneville, and had publicly announced their scheme as settled and decided, before it was even communicated to those to whom it ought, in the first instance, to have been proposed.—He next passed to the violence offered to Switzerland, on which he thought it the less necessary to dwell, because he believed the conduct of France towards that unfortunate and devoted country had excited one universal sentiment of detestation. He wished here to declare (as this had been a subject so often adverted to on former occasions, when he had been unavoidably absent) that he considered the interference of his majesty's ministers on this subject, as not only evidently warranted by the circumstances, but such as was their duty to employ to the extent to which he understood it to have been carried, in order to give time for learning whether a confederacy could be formed in Europe, really sufficient for saving that country from the yoke of France; but that when upon trial all hopes upon such a confederacy vanished, he thought them equally right in not pushing the contest, on the part of this country, to extremities. He then adverted to the continuance of the French army in Holland, which appeared, from the papers on the table, to have been directly inconsistent with the principles on which the treaty of Amiens had been negotiated, and with the engagements which were known to subsist between France and Holland. After dwelling on these points, he stated, however, that he thought it less material to discuss whether they were each in itself sufficient causes

Digitized by Google

of war on the part of this country, because he admitted that whatever might be the justice of the case, our conduct upon them at that time was necessarily regulated, not by that consideration only, but by the question of policy, which was unavoidably dependant upon the state of the continent; but that whatever it might be right to decide upon them at the time they occurred, it was impossible to contend that they were not now material, as symptoms of that deliberative system of ambition and encroachment which had been thus uniformly pursued towards others, and which was now directed to a quarter where it immediately affected our separate interests, and was in direct violation of the treaty with this country itself. He here drew a strong picture of the continued and rapid succession of the acts of violence and oppression which, during that period, had desolated so many of the countries of Europe; and after comparing the irresistible force and overwhelming progress of French ambition to those dreadful convulsions of nature by which provinces and kingdoms were consumed and buried in ruins, he asked, whether we could contemplate those scenes of havoc and destruction without reflecting how soon that torrent of liquid fire might direct its ravages against ourselves.

Having here closed his review of what had passed on the continent, he next observed, that the period of which he had been speaking was marked not only by the hostile acts which he had detailed, with respect to other powers in Europe, but by others immediately affecting the separate rights and interests of this country. He referred, he said, principally to two points which appeared in the correspondence. The first point was the demand which had been made by the French government respecting restraints on the liberties of the press, and the expulsion of the French emigrants now remaining in the country. On this it was unnecessary to enlarge, because the insolence of the proposition was sufficiently felt, and because it had been at the time resisted by his majesty's ministers, on grounds which were stated with great force and ability in one of the papers on the table. The second point related to the commercial agents: the indignity and outrage which attended their mission, was one of which it was difficult to speak with composure. The French government had made a formal proposition to send persons of this description, who had never been found necessary even when a commercial treaty subsisted, at a time when not only there was no such treaty, but when, as appears from the papers on the table, the commercial intercourse of his majesty's subjects with France was suffering every degree of violence and oppression. This proposition had naturally and wisely been refused. The French government then proceeded clandestinely to send these agents in the train of their ambassador; and, not content with this breach of the law of nations, they afterwards addressed to them instructions, under the official character in which they had received admittance, and the object of these instructions was, to direct them to take measures, in time of peace, for ascertaining the soundings of ports, and for obtaining military information of districts, acts for which they would have been hanged as spies in time of war. Under such circumstances, he could not but lament to find that his majesty's ministers had contented themselves with merely applying to the French government to withdraw those persons, and had not at once advised his majesty, by his own authority, to order them to depart the kingdom within twenty-four hours, reserving it to himself afterwards to require from France the reparation due for so gross an insult.

He did not think it necessary to dwell separately on another head of complaint, the violence committed against the vessels and property of his majesty's subjects in the French ports, and the withholding, to this hour, all satisfaction for those injuries. These proceedings, he said, would have been sufficient ground of complaint in ordinary times, but they could scarcely give additional force to the outrageous transactions which he had just enumerated, and which appeared to him as if they had been designedly calculated to include, under two distinct heads, the grossest insults that could be offered to the independence of any country. The first pretension of which he had spoken, that of restraining the liberty of the press, was nothing short of claiming the right to dictate to us in a point of municipal law, and to require that we should sacrifice to the caprice of the first consul, a known and important privilege of our constitution, and model at his pleasure the judicial proceedings and internal regulations of the country. The second pretension,

Digitized by Google

that respecting his commercial agents, manifested, as had been already stated, an avowed determination to introduce, in defiance of our formal refusal, authorized emissaries into our arsenals and ports, in order to prepare in time of peace, the most effectual means for our annoyance and destruction in time of war. This was nothing less than to insist on our surrendering, beforehand, the right and the means of national defence, and if the former claim had struck at the liberty, this struck as directly at the actual safety of the country. It was true, he believed and hoped, that the commercial agents had at length been withdrawn, upon the representation of his majesty's ministers, but as he had already stated and lamented, it did not appear that any disavowal had been obtained of the principle on which they had been sent. The claim respecting the restraint upon the press, and the expulsion of the emigrants, had also been suspended for a time, in consequence of the unanswerable representations in the dispatch before referred to. But the first part of this claim had since been expressly revived in the course of the late negotiation. At all events, he contended, that the circumstance of the first consul having even suspended it as he did, only afforded a striking lesson of the benefit to be derived from a firm and seasonable resistance, but that the fact of such pretensions having at any time been urged (whether they were persisted in or withdrawn) must be remembered as the strongest proof of the nature of the views which he really entertained, and which he would unquestionably accomplish whenever he found it in his power. He maintained, therefore, that all these indignities and insults, as well as the encroachments and violences of which he had before been speaking, on the continent, must enter deeply into our consideration, in judging of the character and ultimate views and policy of our enemy. They must decisively confirm us in the resolution, to employ without hesitation the most vigorous and determined resistance, when, in addition to these proofs of his general disposition, both towards this country and towards Europe, we found him now engaged in that project of direct and separate hostility against ourselves, which had already been argued.

On all these grounds, he felt convinced that there never was an occasion on which it more clearly became the indispensable duty of parliament to concur with his majesty in the declaration of the necessity and justice of the war in which we were engaged, and to assure him of their firm and effectual support. But in giving these assurances, he trusted that other gentlemen felt impressed with the same sense which he did, of the awful importance of the engagement into which they were preparing to enter, and that they considered those assurances, not as formal words of ceremony or custom, but as a solemn and deliberate pledge on behalf of themselves and the nation whom they represented—knowing and feeling to their full extent the real difficulties and dangers of their situation, and of the arduous struggle which it compelled them to endure, and being prepared to meet those difficulties and dangers with every exertion and every sacrifice which the unexampled circumstances of the times rendered indispensable for the public safety. For his own part, although he considered the war as a war of necessity, and one which we could not decline without surrendering both our security and our honour, he should enter upon it with little hope of ultimate success, if these sentiments were not deeply impressed on the minds of parliament and the people. The scale of our exertions could not be measured by those of former times, or confined within the limits even of the great, and till then, unexampled efforts of the last war. He was convinced that some system far more vigorous and effectual than any even then adopted, would be found necessary, both in our finance, and in the preparation for national defence. On the provisions to be made for these two primary and paramount objects, it would principally depend whether we could effectually disconcert the favourite projects, and disappoint the main hopes of the enemy. It was evident that if they indulged themselves in any expectation of success in the present contest, it was built chiefly on the supposition that they could either break the spirit, and shake the determination of the country, by harassing us with the perpetual apprehension of descent upon our coasts, or that they could impair our resources and undermine our credit, by the effects of an expensive and protracted contest. To defeat the first of these purposes, it was not, in his judgment, sufficient to make those naval and military preparations, which would prevent any invasion that might be attempted from

Digitized by Google

being ultimately successful (an event which he trusted he was justified in common with others, in considering as utterly impossible), but to make such vigorous and extensive arrangements for national defence, as might diffuse a sense of the most complete security against even the temporary impression to be produced by such an attempt, and might enable every individual to lay down his head to rest, in the persuasion and confidence that nothing was omitted which could enable us at once to meet and repel the danger, at any moment, and in any quarter, in which it might threaten us.

In order to disappoint the second object —that of wearing out our resources, he trusted the House would from the beginning form its system of finance, not with a view only to the expense which might be necessary in the first year of the contest, but that they would look at once to the possibility of its being protracted to as long a period as that which lately was terminated—that they would consider fully what, on the probable scale of the war, would be the whole extent of the burthens necessary to be imposed on that supposition. He was persuaded, that it could only be by providing, in the outset, means adequate to the whole extent of these purposes, that we could in fact prevent the ultimate amount of our expenses from being unnecessarily, and perhaps intolerably augmented, or that we could ensure the best chance either of bringing the contest to a speedy conclusion, by convincing the enemy of our sufficiency to maintain it, or could meet its continued exigencies, if necessary, without the annual recurrence of growing and accumulated embarrassments. He trusted, therefore, that his majesty's ministers would, on their part, feel the necessity of bringing both these points under consideration with all practicable promptitude and dispatch, and that, if possible, not even a fortnight might be suffered to elapse without enabling parliament to adopt such measures as would convince both France and the world, that we had from that hour provided the means of supporting the force, and defraying the expenditure which might be necessary for maintaining our internal security, and for the vigorous and effectual prosecution of the war, to any period to which it could reasonably be supposed to extend. He repeated, that he was aware that these measures could not be effected without material and extensive personal sacrifices, and without great additional burthens, which must to a degree affect the ease, convenience, and even comfort of many classes of society—that he lamented these consequences as much as any man, and if he saw any prospect that, by present concession, we could obtain a real and desirable interval of peace, security, and repose, he should be as anxious as any man to avoid the necessity of such arduous and painful exertions; but that under the present circumstances, a weak and timid policy could perhaps scarcely even postpone the moment when they would become indispensable for our existence, and would infallibly expose us to the certainty, at no distant period, of a similar struggle, with those means given out of our hands which we now possessed, and with the chance diminished, of finally conducting it to a successful issue—that we had not an option at this moment between the blessings of peace, and the dangers of war—that from the fatality of the times, and the general state of the world, we must consider our lot as cast by the decrees of Providence, in a time of peril and trouble—that he trusted the temper and courage of the nation would conform itself to the duties of that situation—that we should be prepared collectively and individually to meet it with that resignation and fortitude, and, at the same time, with that active zeal and exertion, which, in proportion to the magnitude of the crisis, might be expected from a brave and free people; and that we should reflect, even in the hour of trial, what abundant reason we have to be grateful to Providence, for the distinction we enjoy over most of the countries of Europe, and for all the advantages and blessings which national wisdom and virtue have hitherto protected, and which it now depends on perseverance in the same just and honourable sentiments still to guard and to preserve.

Mr. *Wilberforce* began by observing, that the critical situation of the country naturally rendered every member who had ever taken a part in public affairs, desirous of stating his sentiments. He must therefore trespass on the patience of the House for a short time, though the lateness of the hour would make him endeavour to avoid detail, and be satisfied with explaining the general views he found himself compelled to take of the question

Digitized by Google

before them. He the rather also was anxious to do this, because he could not perfectly accord with any gentleman who had hitherto spoken. His majesty's ministers had, with great candour, desired to separate their own cause from that of their country, and not to draw in the House to any indirect approbation of their conduct, under the colour of offering to his majesty the assurance of the loyal and cordial support of the House of Commons in the perilous exigency of the present moment. He would as far as possible adhere to this line which others had pursued, and reserve for a future occasion such remarks on the conduct of ministers during the negotiation, as had been suggested by a careful perusal of the papers on the table, except so far as would be necessary for explaining his general views.

In general, then, he must avow, that he could not, consistently with his sense of duty, concur in that part of the address which affirmed that his majesty's government had uniformly endeavoured to preserve to their country the blessings of peace, and to prevent that fatal result with which the negotiation had at length terminated. Let me not (said Mr. Wilberforce) be misunderstood. I mean not to deny, that on grounds of strict self-defence, which alone can ever vindicate war, we might justly resort to that dreadful extremity. I admit that the general spirit of faithlessness, ambition, and aggrandizement manifested by the French government towards all other countries, with the commanding tone and port which they have assumed in all their dealings with other nations; that the marked hostility towards this nation which they have uniformly discovered, combined with the formidable means which they possess of giving effect to that hostility; to which I may fairly add the views they have indicated on Egypt, their possession of which, would be highly dangerous to our possessions in the East Indies; all these considerations confirmed and heightened by the several acts of injustice and indignity, stated so forcibly in his majesty's declaration, constitute such a body of aggression, injury, and insult, and manifest such a rooted spirit of hostility towards us, as to give us a right, on principles of provident self-defence, to declare war against France, if, all circumstances considered, war should appear to be dictated by the principles of sound policy, But, for reasons which I will presently assign, it is my decided opinion, that the real security, the true interest of this country strongly enforce the expediency of avoiding war, if possible, in the present situation of our affairs, and, what is more, I cannot but believe that his majesty's ministers have plunged into it rashly and unnecessarily, and that the chief ground on which they have rested their cause, the main hinge on which all has turned, is not such as they can fully vindicate. I mean not that we should tamely submit to indignities or to any infringement on our essential interests, but every consideration of sound policy recommends to us in the present circumstances of this country and of Europe, the lesson which is dictated by still higher principles, that every drop of the cup of conciliation should have been drained before we threw it from us.

Sir, it must not be forgotten, that notwithstanding the various charges brought against France in his majesty's declaration, Malta is in one sense the sole ground of war. In our ultimatum we have distinctly stated, that if the French government would concede to us the island of Malta in perpetuity, or even for ten years, we would pass by all other subjects of difference, and consent to the continuance of peace. All therefore turned on Malta. Now, I must fairly declare my opinion, that his majesty's ministers were not warranted in making this demand of retaining Malta, and that they have acted unwisely, I had almost said unjustly, in putting the whole cause on this issue. Granted that difficulties had occurred—difficulties not only not created by us, but of which France had been the secret instigator—which, by preventing the execution of the conditions by which we meant to provide for the independence of the island, had fairly prevented our evacuating it on the day fixed by the treaty of Amiens; yet still, we should have used our endeavours to overcome those difficulties and to provide other means of accomplishing the same end. In short, without going into detail, instead of claiming the island of Malta for ourselves, either in perpetuity or for a term of years, we should have expressed to France our readiness to concur in and concert any measures which, by providing for the independence and neutrality of Malta, should give effect to the treaty of Amiens, and have declared our readiness to evacuate the island so soon as that independ-

Digitized by Google

ence and neutrality should be secured. This was the language of his majesty's ministers till the 9th of February; then they suddenly changed their style; then for the first time lord Hawkesbury advanced that principle so difficult in its application, and so liable to be perverted and abused, that we had a right to retain Malta, in order to compensate us for the increase of power and territory acquired by France subsequent to the treaty of Amiens. It was stated, however, that though this principle would of itself have justified our retention of Malta, his majesty's ministers would not have acted on it, but for our jealousy of the first consul's views on Egypt, which had been reasonably excited by the publication of Sebastiani's letter. On that letter I will not say much, but I must confess, that I think it scarcely warrants the conclusions which have been drawn from it. Do I mean to deny that it proves that the longing eyes of the first consul are still cast on Egypt? No; I never doubted it—I never entertained a doubt of his wishing to obtain possession of that country, on a thousand principles too obvious to require enumeration. I can appeal to my own sentiments and language at the time of the discussion on the preliminary articles, and on the definitive treaty of peace, to prove, that it was my own decided conviction, that Buonaparté would covet the possession of Egypt, not only as affording the means of assailing our eastern settlements, not only as in itself a province of great fertility and much promise, but as in some sort wiping off the stain which had tarnished his military reputation, and of showing to the world that he had not been finally baffled in a project long so dear to him, by the superior valour and influence of Great Britain. But, did not this House, did not his majesty's ministers entertain the same suspicions of the first consul's views before the signing of the definitive treaty? Were not these suspicions the very ground on which we contended so earnestly for the independence of Malta? Were not all the complicated provisions by which this independency was to be secured, so many outworks for defending our East Indian territories, by preventing Buonaparté's obtaining possession of Egypt? I repeat it—Sebastiani's letter added nothing to my former conviction on this head. For what did it show? not that the first consul would take possession of Egypt if he foresaw that a war with this country would be the consequence of the seizure, but that he still looked to it with desire and hope. But why, on this account, ask to retain Malta in our own possession? The independence and neutrality of Malta would have enabled us to keep a fleet in the Mediterranean, and thereby prevent his execution of his designs on Malta if any such he entertained. This is what, by the treaty of Amiens, we had a right to claim; with this we should have remained contented—Malta is indeed a valuable possession, but the most valuable of all the possessions of this country is its good faith. It is a possession which above all others we should watch with jealous circumspection, and guard from the very suspicion of infringement with anxious care. This, then, is my grand objection to the conduct of ministers, that, by claiming the possession of Malta instead of its independence, they took ground which was barely tenable. They gave our inveterate enemy an opportunity of mis-stating our real views both to France and to Europe. They gave him an occasion of urging, however falsely, those charges on the spirit of commercial rapacity and monopoly by which our councils were influenced, which had been before so industriously circulated, and of stating, that conceiving we had caught him unprepared for war, and unwilling to renew it on account of the situation of his fleet and army in St. Domingo, we had sought to turn this state of his affairs to our own purposes, and had endeavoured unjustly to retain a valuable possession, which, by the treaty of peace, we had stipulated to evacuate.

Again, it appears to me, that the king's message to parliament was a measure which tended to create a breach between the two countries. Certainly it has not been proved that any great armaments were making in the ports of France; but I will pass over this topic—I confess that great allowances ought to be made for administration, who, it must be remembered, were in the painful situation of being responsible for the security of this country. But it was urged in defence of his majesty's ministers, that they must make a stand somewhere; they had been subjected to a long course of injury and insult, and it was unfair to state the point on which they at last took their stand, as if it were the only point of difference; true, but in proportion as it was necessary, in the circumstances of his majesty's

Digitized by Google

ministers, that they must take their ground somewhere, in that same proportion was it incumbent on them to select the ground on which they would make their final stand with more than ordinary caution and judgment. Their title to it should be so indubitably clear, that not the shadow of an argument could be urged against it; and this, for the reasons I have stated, is not the case when they take their stand on the retention of Malta. And after all, is it not unquestionable, that though when war actually took place, we enumerated, as we had a right to do, many other matters of complaint; yet Malta was the real point at issue between the two countries. Malta was that which our being suffered to retain, would render us willing to pass by and overlook all other grounds of difference.

Again,—The conduct of his majesty's ministers in the case of Switzerland renders it almost impossible for me to concur in declaring in the words of the address, my sense of their anxious and uniform endeavours to preserve the blessings of peace.—My feelings towards that brave and much injured people, render it indeed difficult for me to condemn administration, for almost instinctively coming forward, to rescue them from the yoke which was imposed on them by the injustice and oppression of the French government. But contemplating that whole business with a statesman's eye—estimating the interest we have in preserving the independence of Switzerland, estimating also our means of preserving that independence by our single exertions, and the improbability of our effecting any powerful confederacy for this object among the continental powers, I find myself reluctantly compelled to declare it as my opinion, that the conduct of government was in that instance unwarrantable, and that they were not justified in exposing this country to the manifold evils and dangers of war for the sake of the liberties of Switzerland.

After having discussed the justice of the war, I need not spend much time in endeavouring to prove, that whether with a view to the circumstances of our own country, of Europe, or even of the French government itself, sound policy dictated our avoiding a contest with France in the present moment, and our endeavouring, if possible, to put off a recurrence to arms. I will not specify what will but too readily suggest themselves to gentlemen's own minds, the various circumstances in our own situation, in the state of various parts of our great empire, which render it peculiarly desirable for us to obtain a breathing time—a respite from the evils and exhaustion of war, wherein we might be able to reinforce our strength, to repair and invigorate our resources, to gain the hearts and secure the affection of all classes of our people, and to fit the vessel of the state for that stormy sea, for that war of elements which it was but too probable she will ere long have to encounter.

But still more—are we not admonished by the state of Europe, to pause, and, if possible, not to renew the contest just now, when we must be obliged to fight the battle with our single strength. By waiting we have all to gain and nothing to lose.—Europe is now spiritless and exhausted—It bows under the ascendancy of the French government; but after a time, the power and strength and spirit of Austria may be expected to revive: the other great powers may see their real interest, and Holland, Switzerland, and Italy, which now, without a great continental power to combine and head their efforts, must bow to the yoke, and furnish all the supplies both of men and money which the French government will extort from them, for prosecuting the war against us; these subjugated powers would then, we might hope, obey the natural impulse of their hearts, and unite in shaking off the galling fetters under which they had been suffering so grievously. I am glad of this occasion of vindicating myself from that mis-statement which had been sometimes made of my opinions on the subject of continental connexions. Never did I, or could I maintain, that we ought not studiously to join our efforts with those of other continental powers when united by the bonds of a common interest. I only contended, and I am ever ready to justify the position, that it appears from the history of this country, that we have been too apt to make ourselves principals in continental quarrels; we have been somewhat too forward to engage in wars, and above all we have continued them too long, for continental objects, contrary to the true policy and real interests of this country. But with a view to the state of France also, it was highly desirable to put off if possible, the season of war—war at present would serve only to heighten that spirit of hostility towards this country which, I am sorry to say, I have heard from well-informed travellers, exists already in but too great force. War, at present, will tend to

Digitized by Google

confirm that character France has in some degree assumed, which for the happiness of mankind in general, as well as for our own, we should especially deprecate, the character, attributes, and qualities of a military government. War will render it a point of honour with the head of the French government, whoever he may be, to carry on successful war against Great Britain, whereas, peace, by awakening her industry, by reviving her commerce and manufactures, by causing her people to taste the sweets and enjoy the comforts of plenty and security, would create a spirit of a different sort, and render it far more difficult for an unprincipled government to sport with the happiness of a numerous people, and to render their persons and property the blind and servile instruments of his insatiable ambition. Every consideration, therefore, enforces on us the expedience of putting off, if we are able, the season of war. By every year's delay we should have gained; our enemy would have lost. But it was the less necessary for us in the present moment to commence the war, because we already have Malta in our possession. My right hon. friend has said, that such are the provocations we have received, that we should be even justified in declaring war against France, if the peace had continued ten years, and Malta itself were in her possession. I reply to my right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt), on whose return to us this day, with undiminished powers, I congratulate this House and my country, that if Malta had been in the possession of France ten years, it is not necessary for my argument to deny that we ought immediately to attempt to take it. But when we already have it; when we actually enjoy all that security for our eastern settlements which the possession of Malta, by protecting Egypt, affords to them, what need is there, what cause for precipitating a war, which on all other grounds it is so much our interest to delay.

But the first consul, it is alleged, declared that he would regard our retention of Malta contrary to the treaty of Amiens as a declaration of war—true, that declaration was made in an early stage of the proceedings; but I cannot but think what passed afterwards affords us reason to believe, that the independence at least of Malta, if not our retention of it for ten years would have been acquiesced in, rather than that the war should be recommenced—and this is my reply to my right hon. friend who states that it was the alternative, Malta or war—the retention of Malta or the renewal of hostilities. No, Sir, there was another alternative, the independence of Malta; that independence which we had a right to claim under the treaty of Amiens, and which would have secured Egypt, and thereby our eastern possessions. It appears to me also, that we were not sufficiently prompt in our disposition to avail ourselves of the mediation of Russia for the prevention of hostilities, and the settlement of the differences between the two countries. In short, government conceived sanguine hopes, that their claim of Malta, in possession, would be conceded to them, and in pushing forward to this object, they overran themselves, and plunged too precipitately into that war which we must all deplore.

Sir, when I thus maintain that the king's ministers have not used their utmost endeavours for the preservation of peace, do I mean that they did not sincerely wish for its continuance? Nothing is farther from my intention than to insinuate any such suspicion. I believe they sincerely wish to preserve it, but I cannot honestly say that their measures were wisely adapted to that end. Sir, nothing is more common than for the most violent advocates for war to profess themselves friends of peace: in this view we all are desirous of peace. *Sic petimus pacem* is the motto of a celebrated piece of ordnance which points towards France, on the coast, I think, of Kent. Now this may illustrate my meaning, though I grant it is only latterly that the conduct of ministers subjects them to this illustration. The difference between us is, that in the present moment, my hon. friends seek for peace through the mouth of the cannon, I rather wish it to be sought for through the mediation of the court of Russia. Sir, at this late hour, I will forbear from entering on many other topics which I might otherwise be glad to discuss. Let me not, however, conclude without declaring with truth, that I acknowledge the extreme difficulties of the situation in which his majesty's ministers have been placed; I give them credit for the most pure and honourable intentions. It is unaffectedly painful to me to condemn any part of their conduct; but I am bound to state my honest judgment, and such as I have represented it, is the impression produced on my mind by a careful perusal

Digitized by Google

of the papers which have been laid before us. I feel the importance of unanimity at the present moment, and unanimity I trust there will be, if we must engage in war, in bearing all the manifold evils and sufferings inseparable from a state of hostilities. I shall not be one who will be backward in sustaining, and as far as I may be able, in animating others to sustain, the heavy burthens which will be to be endured; but surely I may be forgiven if I wish that a contest so awful, so perilous as this will be, if it must go forward, should not take place, unless it be absolutely unavoidable. I have not descanted on the evils of war, and endeavoured to affect your passions by turning your minds to the contemplation of its various horrors; not but that I think a very unjust outcry is raised against all those who touch on those topics, while, on the other hand, appeals to pride, to glory, to the reputation of our brave forefathers, are heard with delight and clamorously applauded. It might tend, Sir, to the discovery of the path of truth and wisdom if appeals to the passions were in all cases to be excluded from our discussions, and if we were to confine ourselves to a dry, cold, strict, logical investigation and analysis. But if we allow of appeals to those passions, the influence of which, in persons in our station of life, must be justly affirmed to be particularly strong, surely we should not so squeamishly reject every appeal to those feelings of our nature which teach us to sympathise with the widow and the orphan, and to deplore those various sufferings of which war is above all other calamities the sure and prolific source. Still, great as are these evils, they must be borne, if no other course be open to us consistently with our national security. But on this head let us be very sure we are in the right—let us bear in mind, that it is the nature of the bulk of every people to enter into wars too lightly and easily, but when they begin to feel the pressure, they begin also to scrutinize more accurately the causes of the quarrel, and whether it was unavoidably necessary. If we would then produce and maintain that unanimity which should, in this great and eventful struggle, inspirit our national efforts, and ensure the full exertion of all our force: let us endeavour to render the grounds of the war so indisputably clear and free from all objection, that it will be impossible for any fair mind to entertain a doubt of it; let it be clear to our people, that it is only in the last resort that we have recurred to this fatal extremity; let us endeavour to possess their minds with a just sense of the real cause and object of the contention, and also to make them well acquainted with the conduct of France towards other countries, especially towards those who have too easily given credit to her fair professions, and have believed that she was approaching them in the character of a friend and a deliverer, not in that which properly belongs to her, of an insolent tyrant and a merciless oppressor. Sir, if we can inspire the people of this country with these sensations, as I trust we may, provided we act as we ought to do, arduous as the contest is in which we may have to engage with France, great as is her population, extended as is her empire, under the protection of that gracious Providence to which we owe so many blessings we need not fear for the result. We shall fight not to attack others, but to defend ourselves; and a nation like this never can be conquered, if it be true to itself.

Mr. *Grey*, though he objected to some points of the late negotiation, acknowledged the necessity of resisting the spirit of encroachment shown by France: yet, with a view to leave an opening to accommodation, he moved as an amendment to leave out from the word "commands" at the end of the first paragraph, to the end of the question, in order to insert these words: "To assure his majesty of our firm determination to co-operate with his majesty in calling forth the resources of the united kingdom for the vigorous prosecution of the war in which we are involved; and to express to his majesty the satisfaction with which his faithful Commons have received his majesty's gracious declaration, that he is willing to afford, as far as may be consistent with his own honour and the interests of his people, every facility to any just arrangement by which the blessings of peace may be restored to his loyal subjects."

The address was supported by lord Castlereagh and the Secretary at War; after which, on the motion of Mr. W. Smith, the debate was adjourned till to-morrow.

May 24. The House having resumed the said adjourned debate,

Mr. *T. Grenville* said, that when a call like the present, so superior to any other,

Digitized by Google

was made upon the country, he thought that a sufficient motive for confining themselves strictly to the great duty which was then before them. His majesty had told the House that the aggressions and insults offered to this country by France, had forced him to commence hostilities against that power. Those who thought with him that it was their first duty to remove from the question every point which might prevent that unanimity which was so desirable to enable his majesty to prosecute the contest with vigour and energy would put out of their consideration any thing except the important duty which they had to discharge. After complaining so often of the want of information, he ought to be the first to congratulate the House on the full information which they were now in possession of. The first question for consideration was, whether this country had a right to go to war with France? And the second, whether, having a just cause for war, there was such a want of expediency in pursuing it, that, notwithstanding the justice of the cause, it would not be politic to carry it on? Ever since the treaty of Amiens, there had been one continued system of ambition and aggrandizement on the part of the French republic: and when he considered whether there were just grounds of war, his difficulty consisted rather in the abundance from which he was to choose. If he took the first act, that of sending persons here with the appearance of a commercial character, in the character of peace and claiming the rights of hospitality and protection, whilst their real views were the ascertainment of the means of destroying this country, he thought it was so unparalleled an insult, that it furnished of itself a sufficient cause for war. He would not treat of the annexation of Piedmont, of which country we were the direct guarantees, nor upon the subject of Switzerland. These were amply sufficient grounds for war; but although he would not dwell upon the subjects of the German indemnities, the annexation of Piedmont, the invasion of Switzerland, or of the Batavian republic, yet all these were sufficient proofs of the ambition of the French republic, to excite a disposition on the part of this country to resist the ambition of France. It had been doubted how far some of these were just grounds for war: it had been said that they were not, because at the period of signing the treaty of Amiens, French troops were in Holland, Piedmont was really annexed to France, and Switzerland might be considered to be so. The great argument used in support of the treaty of Amiens was the tone and temper in which it was made, from which if any thing was to be inferred, it was, that a disposition was beginning to arise in France, to act upon the principles adopted by regular governments, and a hope to find in that disposition reasonable grounds for believing, that France would observe the treaties she had made. Now, when there was a general system of ambition and aggrandisement on the part of France, it was said it was no subject of complaint. Be it so. But should this country not be prepared to check that ambition? To say that the influence of France was so great in Holland and Switzerland, that therefore it ought not to be resisted, was so strange an argument, that he did not think it necessary to pursue it. All these acts were, each of them a sufficient cause for war. Here he wished to recur to what related to Egypt, in which there was a direct breach of the treaty of Amiens. By that treaty the French republic was solemnly bound to guaranty the integrity of the Turkish dominions, which became an important object to us, not only in itself, but for the security of our own possessions. In that view he conceived that we demanded security from France against any attempt in that quarter. Egypt was evacuated by our troops, and the evacuation made a sacrifice to peace, whilst we demanded the guarantee as a security for our eastern possessions. If any man doubted the insincerity of France, after reading the report of Sebastiani, it would be extremely difficult to prove it: yet the report was said to be commercial. Vain and idle pretext! Was it possible to conceive that it could be a commercial mission? If any man doubted, however, upon the subject, he desired to refer him to Buonaparté himself, who had distinctly described it as a military mission; and to Andreossi, the French ambassador, who had not attempted to conceal the purpose of the mission under the semblance of commerce, but who distinctly designated it as a military mission. Thus, then, the report of Sebastiani was confirmed in all its military character. But was that all? Look at the supplementary part of the report, view Sebastiani travelling in the republic of the Seven Islands: that republic was,

Digitized by Google

however, not confined to Sebastiani's report; another supplementary account amongst the papers on the table, informed them that the first consul had granted his protection to the Catholic church of the Seven Islands, and that when the members of that communion prayed to God, they must pray for the first consul. Thus stood the case with respect to Egypt. If the report of Sebastiani had merely consisted of an intercepted letter, it might have been said, that it was not a sufficient act of hostility on the part of France towards this country, though he should have contended that it was; but when, in addition to the report, it was adopted by the first consul, and by the French ambassador here, could any reasonable man read that, and doubt that there had been in the mind of Buonaparté an hostile view with respect to Egypt, a disposition to act directly contrary to his own guarantee of the integrity of the Turkish empire? This was even not all; but when, in the declaration of his majesty, it was stated that the French government had suggested the idea of a partition of the Turkish empire, he must suppose that it related to a regular proposal made by France to a great northern power, for such a partition. With respect to this point, no documents were offered; but if ministers had not referred to it, they would have done less than their duty; and to have referred to it more distinctly, would have been more than was called for. Before he quitted this subject, he could not help adverting to an expression that had been used, that Buonaparté had a desire to possess himself of Egypt. If it was meant to be said that there was an abstract wish on the part of the great consul, possessing half the world, secretly, silently, and piously to add Egypt to his dominions, he could not conceive that such a simple abstract wish could be a cause for war. But putting together facts, would any man assert that it was a fair interpretation of those facts, to say merely that Buonaparté had a desire to possess himself of Egypt? That desire was shown by acts so manifestly in breach of the treaty which he had signed, that we were justified in saying that it was a hostile breach of faith. Steps had been taken by the first consul, which clearly indicated the means by which his designs were to be executed. From the moment that any hostile act was committed by France, we were justified in using every means for our own security. The best means by which the first consul could execute his projects upon Egypt were those which he thought the most necessary to the accomplishment of his desire; they depended upon Malta, and if we had evacuated Malta, we should have been justified, after the report of Sebastiani, in endeavouring to retake it. Would any man say that if it was just to retake it, it was not also just to retain it when it was already in our possession? In this view of the subject, he would not go into a minute discussion respecting the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens. He would grant, that if the stipulations of the treaty had been fulfilled, and we had then refused to deliver up Malta, a breach of that treaty might have been alleged against us; but no case had ever been made out by France, which gave her a right to demand the evacuation of Malta by us. He really thought that there never was a period in which so many and such invincible grounds, of war, on the part of this country, were so clearly and distinctly made out. It might be said, that amply sufficient grounds of war might exist, and yet considerations of expediency might render it doubtful whether parliament should recommend the prosecution of the war; but were there or not any such grounds of expediency at the present moment? If they were to say, that such a war at the present moment would not be a dangerous experiment, and that it would not press heavily, in point of expense, upon every man in the country, they would be deceiving themselves, and disguising the truth. But what had they to consider? He lamented that their choice upon this occasion would only be a choice of great evil. Before, however, they agreed to a change for war, they were to consider what they would lose. Was it peace that they would lose? Would any man say that it was a change from peace to war? It was, on the contrary, a change from a state of unequal truce to a state of equal war. They must look danger courageously in the face, and hope with confidence for a glorious result. Did they sacrifice, by such a change, that which was valuable, or even tolerable? Without entering into the consideration of the conduct of ministers, he would ask, whether, if the wisest men in the country had been at the head of affairs, they would have suffered the last two months of protracted negotiation, during which we experienced not a peace but a truce, in

Digitized by Google

which we disarmed whilst the enemy armed—in which we were called upon to give up our conquests, whilst the enemy was pursuing a system of aggrandizement, and completing their military preparations, to be afterwards carried into effect against this country? Was it to be said, that we were to wait till they had completed all their arrangements? And were we to be taught to wait patiently the event of the attack, and not to take those means which we were called upon by God and man to take for our own security? It might be said, that even at the period of the present discussion, we had gained an advantage of vast moment, since the great and mighty republic of France had thought fit to abandon the important acquisition of Louisiana. He could not conceive that any one would be so childish as to ask, whether that was a fresh indication of a pacific spirit? What was the cause of it? The war. However paradoxical it might seem, he considered that cession as a fresh indication of a hostile mind on the part of France. It was evident that it was the object of France, in this cession, to do away one enemy more, and to endeavour to prevent an alliance between the United States and this country. It had been said that we were without allies: he did not see any occasion for treating our former continental alliances so lightly as they had been treated. But however we might be without allies, to those countries with whom we might wish to ally ourselves, it would not be unimportant to show our readiness to repel a danger which was common to all, to show our disposition courageously to meet the difficulties which presented themselves, and bravely to overcome them. With respect to the amendment, it appeared to him that there was no duty more incumbent upon them, when representing the spirit and sense of the country upon the present occasion, than that they should speak with an unanimous voice. There was no sacrifice which he would not make, consistently with conscience and honour, to obtain that unanimity. If, then, he saw in the amendment no material difference, must he not complain, that, without any essential difference, it should have the effect of weakening that unanimity? Though there was not one word in that amendment that he would not willingly subscribe to, yet he could not but lament that it would have the effect of preventing parliament from speaking with an unanimous voice. The country was placed in a very arduous situation; but he was confident that the spirit of Englishmen was amply sufficient to encounter successfully the perils which surrounded them, and that there would be found means, and mind, and spirit to meet the contest in which we were engaged. If the country was true to itself, and parliament was true to the country, there need be no fear for the issue of that contest.

Mr. *Whitbread* said, the right hon. gentleman had called for unanimity in the discussion of this subject. The right hon. gentleman had said, that there was nothing he would not sacrifice for the sake of unanimity, except honour and conscience. He put it to the right hon. gentleman under the gallery (Mr. Pitt) and to the right hon. gentleman who had just spoken, whether they could, with a safe conscience, vote a direct approbation of the conduct of ministers to which the present address would pledge them? He called upon them to say, whether ministers had uniformly manifested a desire for the maintenance of peace? whether ministers had conducted themselves well, and whether they had not committed the honour of the country? The right hon. gentleman had distinctly admitted, that ministers had committed the honour of the country; and if the right hon. gentleman could not approve of them, he could not approve of that part of the address which went to the approval of their conduct. Let those, therefore, who called for unanimity, vote for the amendment, which went the full length of pledging their lives and fortunes in the support of his majesty in the contest in which we were engaged, without pledging themselves to the approval of the conduct of his majesty's ministers. He acknowledged the brilliancy of the speech made by a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt) on the preceding evening, and he so much the more regretted the part that right hon. gentlemen had taken, for as it had been said that one person in France had absorbed the whole power of that mighty empire, so it might be observed, that if ever the fate of empires hung upon the lips of one individual, it was on the lips of that right hon. gentleman on the preceding evening. He regretted the part which that right hon. gentleman had taken, and should have been happy if it had been otherwise, for no one would be more happy than himself at the return to

Digitized by Google

power of any one who was disposed to restore peace, which he thought might still be restored. He thought the negotiation had been conducted ill, and that when it was broken off, it might still have been brought to a happy issue. What did we now go to war for? Was it not on account of the single paper of the ultimatum of this country which now lay upon the table? And if France had accepted that ultimatum, should we or should we not be now at peace? If so, let them dismiss all circumstances of aggravation from the discussion of the subject before them. No man felt more than he did the aggravated insults offered to this country by France; but why not make representations upon each insult received, and, if no satisfaction was obtained, why not appeal to parliament? What were the circumstances which related to the treaty of Amiens. On the 23rd of November last, his majesty's speech was made to parliament. He confessed that the speech of the chancellor of the exchequer upon the address, was far from being satisfactory to him. He took the liberty at that period to ask for explanation; and if he did not much misinterpret what was then stated by that right hon. gentleman, it was, that there was no danger of any breach of the treaty of Amiens. From this circumstance, a grave and weighty responsibility rested upon ministers. The subject of Switzerland had been dwelt upon already with so much eloquence, that he should only say, that he viewed the events which had taken place in that country with as much horror as any man. But how did the question stand with respect to that country? At the time that Buonaparté invaded its liberties, a Swiss deputy applied to the powers of Europe, through the medium of their ambassadors at Paris, for assistance; they were only successful in their application to this country. A note was presented from lord Hawkesbury, remonstrating with the French government respecting that subject. A letter of instructions dated the same day with that note, was sent to Mr. Moore, giving him an irrevocable power to involve this country in a war with France. Thus, after the refusal of the other powers of Europe was known, and ministers having, on the 23rd of November, risked a war with France on the subject of Switzerland, and not then knowing the issue of the negotiation, they did then, in point of fact, inform the country, that there existed no danger of any breach of the treaty of Amiens. How was this to be interpreted? Ministers sent out immediate orders, in consequence of this dispute not to evacuate the Cape of Good Hope and other places, which was a direct breach of the treaty of Amiens. Soon afterwards they sent out orders to evacuate those places. This would serve to show how ministers interpreted their own act respecting Switzerland. It was most extraordinary that at the same time when they sent out orders not to evacuate the Cape and other places, no orders were sent out not to evacuate Malta, which was more particularly the subject of dispute between the countries, on the importance of which so much stress was laid, and which it now appeared formed the whole subject of the present contest. On the 8th of December, when a flourishing statement of the finances of the country was made by the chancellor of the exchequer, he then said, that there was no danger of any breach of the treaty of Amiens. At the time of his majesty's message respecting the prince of Wales, the same thing was repeated. Very soon afterwards came his majesty's message, announcing a probable rupture with France: distinct information had been asked for as to the grounds of that message, but ministers had never yet given it. It had been asked by a right hon. gentleman, what we should give up by going to war. Let that right hon. gentleman consider the sorrow which was produced throughout the country by the tidings of that message, and let him imagine the real grief which it occasioned. As to the opinion of the country, if it was polled from one end to the other, there was not one man to be found who would not say, that if we had received insults from France, those insults ought not to go unredressed; but let that opinion be taken in the same way, as to the conduct of ministers, and whether they had done all in their power to avoid war, and he believed the answer of a large majority would be, that they had not. That was also his feeling upon the subject. He thought that ministers had passed over in the Declaration, many points with respect to which the tone of France was more insulting, or at least as much so as in those they had noticed. With respect to the representations of France respecting libels alleged to be published against

Digitized by Google

the government of that republic in this country, such remonstrances should have been treated with contempt. The answer should have been, we have no satisfaction to give you, take your remedy. With respect to the commercial commissioners, did ministers do their duty? were those men sent out of the country? The consequence of their not doing their duty was, that it still remained a problem, whether they had received satisfaction from France on that point: and this, mixed up with other things, was brought forward as matter of aggravation against France. Lord Hawkesbury had been called upon to send out of the country certain individuals because they were obnoxious to France. No Briton would contend that men who had received the protection of this country, ought to be sent out of it; but it appeared that the noble lord had made a promise upon the subject. But how should the representations upon that subject have been met? By a direct refusal; and if France chose to avenge herself, let her do it.—The subject of the aggrandizement of France had been already ably discussed. Those who voted against the peace of Amiens, stated this as a reason why they opposed that treaty. But how was it with respect to his majesty's ministers? The independence of Holland was secured; but the fact was, that French troops were in the Batavian republic at that time, and continued there. Were any representations made respecting those troops? Several motions were afterwards made by those troops, for the purpose, as it was supposed, of quitting the Batavian republic, but they stopped on the frontiers of Holland, under the pretext of being destined to serve in the expedition to Louisiana; but was there any formal remonstrance upon this subject? He should have thought it proper that ministers should have sent a formal representation, in order that they might have had a formal answer; then they might have come to parliament with their doubts; and there would now have been no dispute about the object of war. The independence of Switzerland was secured by the treaty of Luneville; yet, eight or nine months after the signature of that treaty, the French troops were not withdrawn from that country: that might have been considered as an omen of the bad faith of France. A considerable time elapsed between the signature of the treaty of Luneville, and that of the treaty of Amiens, and still the French troops were not withdrawn. Those who made the treaty of Amiens must have considered at that time that Switzerland would be kept by France. All these circumstances were stated, and the argument by which they were answered was, that it was to be supposed that the treaty would be executed. A system of aggrandisement was likewise pursued in Italy; and at the time of signing the treaty, Piedmont was in fact annexed to France, by being made a military *arrondissement* of that country, which was very little different from being really annexed to France. The isle of Elba was likewise taken under the protection of France, and that protection was sufficiently known. All these circumstances were known at the time the definitive treaty was signed. It was not therefore for those who signed that treaty, or those who supported it, to contend, that those reasons which existed at the time of signing the treaty were now reasons for going to war. It had been asked by the noble lord (Hawkesbury) on the preceding evening, was no country to come forward to take up the cause of an injured sovereign, or an injured people? He (Mr. W.) agreed, that if a case was made out of injury, their cause ought to be taken up; but it was needless to talk of giving what could not be given. That noble lord had alluded to the German indemnities, the whole of which was a complete system of robbery: but did the noble lord and his colleagues, who knew such a system was resolved upon at the treaty of Luneville, set their faces against it? Now, however, we were to go to war to redress the wrongs of the continent. If the ultimatum on the table was not the object of the war, in God's name let them know the object of it; let them not raise a false spirit in the country; let them know whether the object might be attained or not without going to war. With respect to Malta, which seemed to be the sole object in dispute with a view to Egypt, the noble lord had descanted upon the perfidy of the French government, in throwing difficulties in the way of the guarantees; but he forgot that all the while the French government were throwing difficulties in the way of those guarantees, Malta remained in the possession of England, and that it must have done so whilst those difficulties remained. The noble lord and his colleagues had, however, resolved to fulfil the treaty of

Digitized by Google

Amiens, when, on the 9th of February, a dispatch was sent to lord Whitworth, announcing that the evacuation of Malta would have taken place if a certain circumstance had not happened. This circumstance was Sebastiani's mission. The right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt) had said, that the hostile disposition of the first consul was to be inferred more from the mission than the report. Ministers had stated, that they knew of the mission, and that they knew Sebastiani had seen general Stuart, as in their dispatch to the French government they had stated that Egypt had not been evacuated, in consequence of a mistake. If the report was an act of aggression, he thought that ministers were highly culpable in not remonstrating at the time. Did that report disclose more of the hostile disposition of the first consul than was before known? Egypt was always a favourite object of the French government, and Malta also, with a view to the former. What was done to prevent Malta from falling into the hands of the first consul? It was proposed to garrison it with Neapolitan troops, when the feeling of every military man upon that occasion was, that it was in fact placing it in the hands of France, as the first consul might have it when he pleased. As to the importance of Malta with a view to Egypt, it had been stated upon a former occasion by a gallant officer, that it was of no importance in that point of view. It was not unlikely that the empire of the Ottoman Porte might fall by means of some arrangement of partition, to which the first consul might be supposed to allude in conversation with lord Whitworth, and therefore his words were not to be taken in that sense which was applied to them; but at any rate it only resulted, that all that we knew before upon that subject was confirmed. It appeared that Talleyrand had signified the willingness of the French government to give every security respecting Egypt; he did not think ministers went far enough in inquiring what that security was. The emperor of Russia had offered to guaranty Malta, leaving out the Maltese langue. This morning an important document had arrived, contained in the French official paper, which was a note from the Russian minister, to Talleyrand, stating in the most conciliatory terms, the desire of his Imperial majesty that the treaty of Amiens should be maintained, and his wish to interpose his good offices between the two countries, and at the same time stating, that the English government knew that the emperor could not assent to the Maltese langue, on account of a previous arrangement to the contrary. From this it appeared that his Imperial majesty was willing to interfere between the two countries. With respect to the previous arrangement there mentioned, it appeared very strange, but perhaps ministers might be able to explain it satisfactorily. This however he was sure they would not explain satisfactorily, why they had not noticed that projet of the court of Petersburgh at that time, when there had been no Sebastiani and no message to the legislative body. The publication of the report of Sebastiani, notwithstanding what had been said by the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt), might be considered as an answer to sir Robert Wilson's work, respecting the transactions of our army in Egypt. If the message to the legislative body had been considered as an insult, ministers might have demanded and obtained satisfaction immediately, as they had done in the case of Mr. Reinhard. With respect to the refusal of Russia to guaranty Malta, it was contradicted by the note which had been laid upon the table that evening by the noble lord. He thought that his majesty's ministers might still avail themselves of the interference of Russia, and that peace might even yet be preserved.

Mr. *Dallas** said:—Sir, the papers on the table involve two questions, which may be separate and distinct, or one and the same; the propriety and justice of the war, and the conduct of his majesty's ministers as connected with and preparatory to it: and in this respect the subject seems to be considered in different lights. Some gentlemen are of opinion, that the executive government has borne too much, and think we ought to have insisted upon satisfaction, or to have gone to war long before; others profess to think, that the war might have been avoided, and that not being a necessary, it is not therefore a just war, and in this manner they connect the question of war with the conduct of ministers. The address in substance asserts the war to be just and necessary, and it is to put a negative upon this that

* The present Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas.—A. D. 1820.

Digitized by Google

the amendment has been moved and supported. To those who think we ought to have gone to war before, and that ministers are culpable in this respect only, no argument, of course, is necessary to induce them to vote an address which affects the justice and necessity of the war at the present moment. They must, upon their own principle, vote against an amendment by which these are denied. The address does not pledge those who vote in favour of it to any approbation of the conduct of ministers, who admit the war to be just and necessary; for it may be just and necessary, and yet ministers may be highly culpable; and in this respect, therefore, it leaves the question of general conduct untouched. On the other hand, it may be possible, that a war may be unjust if no adequate cause of offence exists, or if existing, reasonable satisfaction has been refused; and the hon. gentleman who spoke last, rests his support of the amendment upon this ground; and it is with those only who think in this way that any controversy as to the amendment can arise. Is or is not the war then, on the part of this country, just and necessary? And this depends upon a correct consideration of the evidence now before us. The message from his majesty imputes to the French government a restless spirit of ambition and aggrandizement, a hostile disposition manifested towards this country, and insults and indignities for which we have in vain endeavoured to obtain redress; and the address professing to be founded upon the papers on our table, asserts such to be the conviction of the House. It contains, therefore, two distinct grounds of allegation; the one as to the conduct of France, the other as to the measures pursued by his majesty's government to obtain redress for the conduct alleged. I do not find that the gentlemen on the other side have denied the general conduct imputed to the French government, or the insults and indignities asserted to have been offered to this country. As little has it been denied, that to send spies, under the character of commercial agents, to this country, to attempt to interfere with the internal government of the country, to strive to impose foreign restraints upon the freedom of the British press, the treatment of our ambassador at Paris, the libel contained in the report of Sebastiani, the views professed as to Turkey and Egypt, in direct contradiction to the spirit and letter of the treaty of Amiens, are proofs of a hostile spirit. What, then, is it that the amendment proposes? To omit all that part of the address which states the conduct of the French government as forming the ground of war, to expunge from it all the feelings of just indignation, which this House is called upon to express for the insulted honour of the country, for an audacious attempt to violate its most essential interests, and to approach the throne with a niggardly assurance that his faithful Commons will support his majesty in the war in which he is now engaged! I pass over, therefore, the circumstances stated in his majesty's declaration as proofs of a hostile mind. That they required on the part of ministers an endeavour to obtain redress will not be denied. That it has been sought is clear —but has it been sought in vain? As to Holland, as to Switzerland, the contrary is not even pretended; but the stand seems to be made as to the business of Egypt, and on this ground I am willing to meet the hon. gentleman. From the signing of the treaty of Amiens up to the time when the report of Sebastiani appeared, every thing had evinced a strenuous disposition, on the part of ministers, to carry that treaty into effect. The first steps to procure the guarantee of the foreign powers were taken by us, and we appear to have been constantly stimulating the French government to assistance and co-operation. The delay in procuring the guarantee is to be imputed to the French government. Such was the condition of things when the report of Sebastiani appeared. As to the chief consul, he avowed his desire to have Egypt, but he would not go to war for it—why? Not because he felt himself restrained by the ties of honour, or by the faith of treaties, but because "he would lose more than he should gain by it, as he might be considered by Europe as the aggressor, and sooner or later, by the falling to pieces of the Turkish empire, or by negotiation, Egypt must belong to France!" For the detestation of the present day, for the execration of posterity, I rejoice that we have this picture drawn by his own hand. War with him is a matter of political calculation merely, and his choice of it is to be determined by loss or gain. Next, as to M. Talleyrand—in almost every conversation he distinctly admitted that we were entitled to satisfaction and security with respect to Egypt. The whole

Digitized by Google

negotiation as to Malta proceeds upon this principle. Was, then, the satisfaction offered such as we ought to have received? or is it not clear, that every proposal made was unsatisfactory, and made only for the purpose of gaining time? I have not heard any gentleman maintain that any one proposal ought to have been accepted. Before I conclude, there is one question put by the hon. gentleman who spoke last, as to which I admit he is entitled to a distinct answer. For what are we going to war? It is fit, says the hon. gentleman, that the people of England should know. I agree with him that it is; and, therefore, to the hon. gentleman and the people of England, I explicitly say, We are going to war for Malta! not for Malta only, but for Egypt! not for Egypt only, but for India! not for India only, but for the integrity and security of the British empire! for the cause of justice, good, faith, and freedom throughout the civilized world!

General *Maitland* said, it was a matter of public notoriety, that armaments, to a considerable extent, were going on in the ports of Havre and Brest. Those armaments were said to amount only to 9,000 or 10,000 men. The accommodation, however, necessary for transporting such a number to foreign parts, would be sufficient to convey twice that number to our shores. The measure adopted by ministers was therefore a measure of precaution. But it was said, that this might lead to irritation. What! irritate the first consul, who had threatened us in the face of Europe with his army of 480,000 men! With respect to the previous conduct of France, it had been universally admitted, that it afforded this country just cause of war. He did not consider Malta as absolutely necessary to this country to carry on offensive operations in the Mediterranean. But when that he found Malta was in the *ultimatum* of ministers, he would not consider for a moment, whether it was a barren rock, or one of the richest commercial countries; it was sufficient for him that it was in the *ultimatum*; and from that neither menaces nor apprehension of any probable danger should force him to recede.

Mr. *W. Elliot* wished to be distinctly understood, that in voting for the address, he meant merely to express his opinion of the justice of the war, and not to give any opinion upon the conduct of ministers. The war appeared to him both just and necessary. It was not necessary to refer to the repeated acts of insult and aggression offered by France to this country. Upon this subject there were not two opinions. With respect to the mission of Sebastiani, it appeared to him to be a cool, deliberate act of aggression. It was true, that we entered into this war with many disadvantages; we had given up all our conquests; we had given up to France many important possessions, and had lost more by the late unfortunate truce, than we could have done by a disastrous war. Of all things, now that the contest had commenced, he deprecated a speedy and insecure compromise with France; he hoped the contest would be continued until real peace and tranquillity could be restored.

Mr. Serjeant *Best* said, that if he were asked, would he go to war for Malta?—he would answer, "No;" he would not go to war for Malta, nor for a much more extensive possession, in the abstract: but it was the manner in which France demanded Malta, it was the disposition she had shown, it was the designs she had openly avowed, that, in his opinion, justified this country in going to war. If the smallest spot of earth was demanded of us in the manner, and under the circumstances, that France had demanded Malta, he would refuse it, because he would consider it as essentially connected with the safety and the interest of the British empire. He was ready to admit, that between the preliminary and definitive treaties, France had repeatedly given us cause for war; but it did not therefore follow that ministers were to blame for not going to war; for a country was not always to go to war, whenever it had a just cause of so doing. The French government professed a desire to have the treaty of Amiens strictly carried into execution; and had contended, that by that treaty we were precluded from interfering in the affairs of the continent. It was impossible to conceive a more absurd or ill-grounded assertion; because it so happened, that in that very treaty we did stipulate for the integrity of different states upon the continent. What right could the French government have to call upon us for a literal execution of that treaty, when France was at that very time openly planning a gross infraction both of the letter and the spirit of the treaty?

Mr. *Canning* began by stating, that his anxiety to assign the grounds of the vote which he should give that night, in cor-

Digitized by Google

dial support of the address as originally moved, and against the amendment which had been proposed to it, arose principally from the attempt which had been made by the gentlemen who had moved and supported the amendment, to confound in one view the conduct of ministers with the cause of the country, and to establish, that whoever voted for the original address must be considered as expressing a distinct approbation of the manner in which the negotiation had been conducted. Had not such an amendment been proposed, or such a construction been attempted to be given to the original address he should have thought it quite unnecessary to trouble the House with a single word in explanation of his vote in support of the address; a vote which was dictated by feelings such as he was confident were shared by every man who heard him, and which had been already called for and enforced on the former night, in a speech so convincing and so commanding, that he must be insensible indeed who could resist the power of such persuasion; and vain indeed must that man be who could hope to add any thing to its efficacy. He should have contented himself, therefore, with evincing by a silent vote his complete acquiescence in the reasoning of his right hon. friend beside him (Mr. Pitt): and he should have thought that vote sufficiently guarded against misconstruction, by the guards and qualifications which his right hon. friend had provided for his own, if he had not heard the assertion again advanced that day by an hon. gentleman (Mr. Whitbread), that an approbation of the address necessarily carried with it a panegyric on the ministers. From this assertion he begged leave entirely to dissent: but still more solicitous was he to protest against the truth of the proposition which was the converse of it. If to support the cause of the country was necessarily to approve the conduct of ministers, the converse seemed to be, that a hearty disapprobation of the conduct of ministers must necessarily preclude him from supporting the cause of the country. He was most anxious not to be so precluded. He would not allow himself to be so. And, reserving therefore to a future occasion, such as must in all probability occur soon, such as when it should occur he would not shrink from, the expression of his opinion upon many parts of the conduct, not only of the last negotiation, but of the whole of our foreign system, from the peace of Amiens downwards, which was now for the first time brought under parliamentary cognizance; he should content himself that day with stating very shortly the view which he took of the causes, the necessity, and the magnitude of the contest in which we are now embarked: and in our conviction of the justice of which contest, in our perseverance under all its difficulties, and our unanimous determination to bring it to a complete and satisfactory issue, was involved, as he firmly believed, the question of our existence as an independent nation.

In reviewing the causes of the war, as we were now called upon to consider of them, the question of that night appeared to him to be simply this, whether, under the circumstances of the present moment, the war was on our part just and necessary—necessary, unless we were prepared to abandon the plainest and most important interests of the country (an alternative which he trusted no man could dream of submitting to); and whether, such being the nature and character of the war, the House of Commons were prepared to tell his majesty, in the face of the enemy, and in the face of Europe, that they would support him to the utmost of their power in the vindication of the honour of his crown, and the rights and interests of his dominions? This was the single question, and upon this he could not conceive that there could exist any difference of opinion. That the papers on the table involved and suggested many other questions—questions material and important in themselves, and fit to become the subject of grave parliamentary deliberation, he was by no means disposed to deny. Whether too much had not been borne, and too much hazarded by delay; whether ministers had made their stand early enough; whether, if made earlier and in a bolder tone, the enemy might not have been checked in time, and the last extremity possibly avoided; whether the honour of the country had not been compromised by forbearance and concession, and a notion of its humility and readiness to bear injuries and put up with insults suffered to grow up in the mind of the enemy: whether our case had been throughout well argued, and exhibited in its fairest light;—were points upon which, undoubtedly, great difference of opinion might arise; but they were points (in his conception), capable of being completely

Digitized by Google

put out of view in that night's deliberation. Would any man contend, that in a suit at law the justice of a good cause could be vitiated by any mismanagement of the counsel employed to conduct it; or would an upright judge or an enlightened jury, suffer that consideration to influence their decision? Still less would the person interested in the cause be likely to agree to so perverse a mode of judging, and to insist upon complicating in a single verdict or sentence the questions of, whether his cause was good, and whether his counsel had managed it to the best advantage? The question of that night was, whether our cause be good—whether, upon the point now at issue between us and France, we are in the right, as against Buonaparté?

As to the point immediately at issue, and upon which the war actually begins, he agreed in the forcible statement of a learned gentleman, who had spoken for the first time that night, and upon the acquisition of whose abilities he congratulated the house (Mr. Dallas), that it was Malta; to which the learned gentleman properly added, Malta, not for its own intrinsic value and importance only, but Malta, as the defence of Egypt against designs, not secretly cherished, but openly and impudently avowed, and the defence, through Egypt, of our empire in the east. To this qualification of the learned gentleman, he would add, Malta not taken by itself, as a single insulated point of discussion (important as it was, from its association with the great interests just described); but Malta, considered as that point upon which the honour of this country was committed, upon which the last stake of its dignity depended, being (as it was) that last point, upon which, after a series of violences, insults and aggressions, more or less injuriously offered, and more or less undisguisedly maintained, the first consul at length, out of patience with all disguise, or moderation, spoke out plainly, declared his will and pleasure, and left us no other alternative than instant submission or open war. "Malta or war," was the doctrine of Buonaparté. The refusal instantly to evacuate Malta will be considered as the commencement of hostilities," was the less pointed, but not less peremptory or less intelligible comment of the minister Talleyrand. We do not evacuate Malta at the word of command. The other alternative is war. War, therefore, and war for Malta, was not only founded in necessity and justice; but it was just and necessary in a twofold view. It would have been just necessary, and unavoidable, if nothing else were in contemplation than to guard those interests, of which Malta is the natural outwork; and which, the report of colonel Sebastiani, the publication of that report in the official gazette of France, and (if after such a manifestation of design any confirmation were necessary) the confirmation of the projects there developed by the direct avowal of the first consul himself, proved to be the objects of constant, hostile meditation with the government of France. Equally just, equally necessary, and equally unavoidable the war would have been, if we were to have considered only the point of honour (and all those consequences, which, to a nation like this, are involved in the maintenance of its honour); if Malta were no other wise important than as being that on which a peremptory defiance had been thrown out against us, that on which France had thought fit to try our courage, and put our spirit to proof; the last remaining pledge of former glory, fortunately still in our hands, and attempted by France to be extorted from us by menace and insult; the last remaining means of effectual resistance against a general and undisguised system of aggression and violence, against a plan to degrade, to harass, to wear us out by continual agitation; against a spirit of envious, malignant, unchanged, and incurable hostility.

'The indications of this malignant temper, the proofs of these hostile dispositions and designs, were to be found in every page of the papers laid upon the table. An attempt was made indeed to contend, that however atrocious each particular instance of outrage might be, yet that having suffered each to pass without effectual remonstance, and substantial redress, at the time of its being committed, ministers had not only precluded themselves from recurring to them to justify their conduct, but had precluded the country itself from citing them in proof of the justice of its cause. To this mode of reasoning he could not subscribe. That in passing over many things, which they did appear to have passed over without any remonstrance at all, that in offering in other instances, futile and unavailing representations, in accepting insufficient assurances of reparation, and in acquiescing, as had too often been the case, in silent neglect or peremptory refusal,

Digitized by Google

ministers had been guilty of highly blameable misconduct, had disgraced themselves and betrayed the country, Mr. Canning said, he was as little disposed as any man to deny, and at a proper time he should be prepared to argue. But that these neglects or omissions were fatal to the justice of their complaint, that the country could be thereby bound to acquiesce in all that had been done and suffered, nay, that ministers themselves were precluded from recalling, in aid and aggravation of the present immediate cause of war, those prior grievances which would have been and were causes of war, so far as justice was concerned, but which they did not think such as to make war necessary and unavoidable; was a proposition which he would venture to say, could not be maintained without leading to the inferences which those who attempted to maintain it would probably be the last to allow. This proposition was maintained by those who were supporters and approvers of the peace of Amiens. Now if it were admitted, as it could not but well be, and had not been denied, that among the instances of outrage and misconduct on the part of France, enumerated in his majesty's declaration, there were many, even within a short space of time after the treaty of Amiens was concluded, nay, some even before that treaty was signed, which called for atonement; and if it were true, that every such instance ought in all cases, to have been instantly pushed to redress, and that the refusal of redress would have been in every instance cause of war;—not only the peace of Amiens, which those gentlemen now so tenderly regretted, could not have lasted an hour, but it could never have been made: unless, indeed, what surely no man would be found to avow (though there might not be wanting some perhaps who secretly felt it) the peace of Amiens was made upon the terms, and held upon the tenure, of surrendering all acknowledged and established principles of national independence, all right to repel injury or resent insult, all pretence to sympathise with the interests of our neighbours, or even to watch with jealousy over our own.

Short, however, of the principle which he confidently maintained, that the country had lost nothing of its right to redress former wrongs by any omission of ministers to claim it at an earlier period, there was another way in which the enumeration of those wrongs bore strongly upon the immediate cause of war, and contributed to justify ministers themselves in the stand which they had at length thought proper to make. It was simply this: The outrages of which France had previously been guilty, even if past redress, were still historically true (that would hardly be denied); and as such furnished at least strong and indisputable indications of the general spirit by which France was actuated, as well towards this country, as towards all the world. War was a mixed consideration; justice ought to be its first character; but it could not be denied that expediency was also to enter for something into the decision. No war ought to be undertaken at all that was not just; but even a just war might be well avoided, if it were not at the same time expedient to engage in it—if it could be avoided without shame, or danger, without loss of character, or hazard of essential interest. Take the instance of Malta itself. If our dispute respecting that island had grown up between us and some other power, to whom we could attribute no general disposition to violence and unlawful aggrandisement, no particular enmity towards us, no design to turn the acquisition (should it fall into their hands) to our disadvantage; if the discussion were with Russia, with Austria, with Naples;—our cause might still be good, our refusal to evacuate Malta under the circumstances of the present time, would still be completely justifiable; but it would neither be equally necessary, nor equally expedient to have pushed the dispute to the issue of war: because we should have had no previous certainty, no "foregone conclusion," to convince us of the spirit in which the demand was made, of the insult intended to be conveyed in it, and of the advantage to be taken of our compliance. Look then at all those instances of aggression, at all those ebullitions of an insolent and domineering spirit with which the king's declaration is crowded; Piedmont, Parma, Elba, Switzerland, Germany; the press; the emigrants; the confiscation of British commerce; the mission of French commercial commissioners; aggressions abroad, which no former age would have tolerated; insults at home, which at any former period of our history British flesh and blood could not have borne (he would abstain from saying what he thought of the policy of bearing them): but look at them not as distinct

Digitized by Google

causes of war (it was not in that light that the declaration presented them), but as indications of the views, of the general spirit, the *animus* of the enemy; as helps whereby to judge of the intentions of any future demand, and of the policy of any further submission:—and then let the House judge whether, when the demand for the evacuation of Malta came in the shape in which it did come, ministers could so far mistake the meaning and spirit of it, as not to feel, that in complying with it (if they had so complied), they would have put out of their own hands an instrument of defence, and into the hands of Buonaparté a weapon of offence and attack, of which a few short weeks would have taught him all the value; and that, instead of preserving peace by this last act of condescendence and submission, they would only have invited further aggressions, and ensured the execution of the threat of war, in exact proportion as they had shown themselves unwilling to encounter it, and had thrown away their means of meeting it to advantage?

If in one view, therefore, of the question of the retention of Malta, considering it as the only remaining point upon which (after letting so many others go by, whether wisely or not he would not now argue) ministers could make their stand; considering the demand for its immediate evacuation, accompanied with the threat of immediate war in case of refusal, as the crown and summit of a heap of injuries and insults, as the last of a long train of outrages, either now to be resisted, or to be submitted to patiently for ever; if in this view the choice of ministers was perfectly defensible; if, in fact, they had no choice; Mr. Canning confessed, that in the other view, considering Malta as the possession in the world the most applicable to guard against the specific danger which we foresaw, and the specific attack with which we were threatened, he not only thought ministers right in refusing to surrender the island; he not only thought parliament and the country bound to adopt this refusal as their own; and to support and maintain it with their most cheerful concurrence, and most strenuous exertions; but he perfectly agreed in a sentiment uttered early in that debate by his right hon. friend (Mr. Grenville), that if Malta had not still, by great fortune, been in our hands; if the question had been not about refusing to surrender, but about endeavouring to recover it—not about its retention, but its conquest by force of arms,—we should have been justified in attempting that conquest and recovery; nay, we should, have been untrue to ourselves if we had not attempted it with all our means. He agreed in this sentiment most cordially; but he agreed in it, in the sense in which it was uttered by his right hon. friend, not in that which had been put upon it by an hon. gentleman (Mr. Whitbread). That hon. gentleman had (he was persuaded from misapprehension only) represented the avowal of this opinion on the part of his right hon. friend, as an avowal of a resolution to invade the rights of unoffending and neutral nations in a quarrel between Great Britain and France, as if the argument had been of this sort, that the views of France upon Egypt would have been a sufficient reason with us for wresting Malta from the Maltese. No such thing. His right hon. friend had studiously guarded himself from such a misinterpretation: and he (Mr. C.) begged leave to do the same, by stating (not so much by argument as by an assumption which he believed nobody would venture to controvert), that the surrender of Malta on our part, at the demand of France—under any of the provisions which either the treaty of Amiens itself, in the first instance, or any of the fruitless and hopeless attempts which appear in the papers on the table, to amend and make effectual that absurd and impracticable article had yet devised,—would have been tantamount to a surrender of the island directly into the hands of France. It was as against France, therefore, that his right hon. friend had stated, that we should be justified; it was as against France, that he concurred with his right hon. friend, in thinking that we should be not only justified, but compelled by self-defence, to have seized the island of Malta, if it had been out of our possession, from the very moment when Buonaparté's views on Egypt became manifest to the world, the very moment, that is, when colonel Sebastiani's report was published.

There was but one other point respecting Malta upon which he felt it necessary to say a single word. A doubt had been expressed as to the real importance of that island, in the view, and for the purposes, which had been assumed by the government, and by every gentleman who had argued in support of the war; a doubt how far Malta could properly be called

Digitized by Google

the key of Egypt, and of the upper part of the Mediterranean, the rock of defence against all projects against the peace of that part of the world. To this doubt any man unlearned in military and naval science, could only oppose his own belief, founded, of course, on the authorities which he thought most sufficient, and on the observation of what had passed within the last few years. Foremost in the list of these authorities, it must not be forgotten, was Buonaparté himself. What he appeared so strenuously to covet as a line of approach to the more distant objects of his restless ambition, it was natural for those who were interested in preserving those objects to regard as the best outwork of their defence. Nor was it to be overlooked, that in both the expeditions to Egypt, that which conquered, and that which rescued it, Malta was, as it were the first stage of their progress, and the first earnest of their success. When Buonaparté sailed to the conquest of Egypt, the first notice we had of his route, and the first omen of his future victories, was, the occupation of Malta. When that army, which reversed all his victories, and reconquered all his acquisitions, went in pursuit of the glory which Buonaparté's transitory successes had prepared for them—they followed his footsteps; and it was from the rest, refreshment, and recruit which they obtained at Malta, that they arrived in Egypt, vigorous and healthful, and prepared on their first landing to achieve those wonders which decided the fate of an enterprise, the splendid events of which even the history of this country can scarcely parallel, and the fruits of which it is as much our interest as our duty not to throw away. That the possession of Malta can be a matter of indifference towards the preservation of the security which those victories acquired us in that quarter of the world, and under the circumstances of the present time, is not easily to be imagined. The importance of Malta upon any general view and scale of things, might, perhaps, not be so certainly appreciated. It has lain out of the road of European warfare for many ages past. But the gigantic schemes of conquest and of empire, projected by the first consul of France, threaten to make the shores of the Mediterranean in modern, as they were in ancient times, the scenes of the most awful and obstinate struggles, and of the most stupendous revolutions in political and military affairs. Interested as Great Britain must necessarily be in the remote, if not the immediate results of those struggles and revolutions, whenever they are attempted, the experience of the last war would surely justify a strong prejudice at least, if not a confirmed opinion, of the importance of a port, the possession of which has enabled us and will no doubt enable us again, to make that field of renewed conflict in the Mediterranean, whenever we are called to act upon it, a field of new triumph and additional military glory to Great Britain. But while he stated thus strongly his persuasion of the importance of Malta, in the present time, and with a view to the events which appeared to be impending, Mr. Canning begged not to be considered as pledging any opinion that the possession of Malta was, therefore, the sole object of the war; that the war was therefore to be carried on, or the peace (whenever peace should be possible) to be made, solely or principally with the object of retaining Malta to Great Britain. Undoubtedly he should consider the perpetual possession of Malta as very desirable and very advantageous. Undoubtedly Malta did appear to be the best security that could be obtained against dangers immediately menacing some of the most important interests of this country. But he was not one of those who thought that the separate interests of this country were all that we ought to have in our contemplation; or that the war, now that we had been forced into it for them, ought to be conducted, or concluded with a view to them only. He was not one of those who thought that this country could be soundly and lastingly secure by a narrow policy, and a selfish and insulated system. Opinions of that sort had been gaining ground, he was afraid, almost ever since the signing of the peace. They had been brought forward, perhaps, in the first instance, to reconcile the nation to the terms of that peace; they had been encouraged, or, to say the least, had not been sufficiently discouraged, even in that House, because they had a tendency to direct the thoughts of the people from what was passing in the world around them, or to harden their feelings to it, by a persuasion that it was no concern of theirs.

Much stress has been laid by many gentlemen (said Mr. Canning), in the course of this debate, on the advantages

Digitized by Google

resulting to the country from the peace of Amiens, from the experiment, as it is called, of that peace having been fairly tried. I am not inclined to dispute these assertions. And one advantage I am willing to persuade myself, which will have resulted from the trial of that experiment is, that we shall all feel a conviction henceforward, that a peace of such a sort, and on such a system, is not the peace which suits this country; is not one which can assure to us the real blessings, the substantial security, or the uninterrupted continuance, of a state of peace.

There are those who have maintained in this House, and especially in the debates which took place before Christmas, when most, or many of those outrages of France, which are now cited by his majesty's ministers (not as causes of war indeed, but in aid and aggravation of the principal cause), were publicly notorious, and were alluded to in debate; there were those who then maintained (and among them were some persons for whose talents and character I am sure I have the highest respect and regard), that an insulated system of policy, a disclaimer of continental interests, a separation of ourselves from the rest of the world, was the safest and most advisable system on which a country, situated as ours, could act. Any allusions to the course of policy which had distinguished the most splendid and prosperous periods of our history, any lamentations over the rank which we once held in the world, and the influence which we formerly exercised in the affairs of Europe, were then, I well remember, received with rebuke, as incitements to an unseasonable spirit, and instigations of violence and warfare. Great pains were taken, and many arguments used, to reconcile us to a lot more humble. To be great, it was stated, was not necessarily to be happy. No, Sir, I would admit greatness and happiness are not necessarily united, either in a state or an individual. But this is not putting the question fairly. The question is, whether, when they have been long united, they can ever easily be separated, without the hazard of producing, either a convulsion, which shall destroy existence, or a decay, which shall slowly undermine it? An individual may be happy without being a king. But when did abdicated royalty retire to lasting security and peaceful contentment? A nation may be prosperous without being great; but when its greatness and prosperity have been long interwoven together, the alternative is no longer within its choice; it cannot resign the one, without risking the sacrifice of the other.

Sir, we have tried this system, and are now in a state to judge how we like the result of it. We have before us the contrast of two opposite plans of policy; after a century of busy, active, complicated connexions with the powers of Europe, of assistance to their wants, and sympathy with their concerns, which have engaged us in war, no doubt, and subjected us to disquietude and difficulty—we have had eighteen months, or thereabouts, of abstraction from continental interests and alliances, during which we have left Europe to shift for itself, determined on our part to decline all interference, to avoid all contest, and hoping to be respected—or at least (which perhaps, was in truth our utmost hope) to be let alone. Compare the rank and station to which we raised ourselves by the former policy, with that to which we have been fast descending during the prevalence of the latter. Weigh the insults which we have borne, the aggressions to which we have been exposed during the short space of eighteen months, against all the causes and provocations of war scattered over the face of the preceding century, and see if the former do not preponderate.

We have found then (and this is the experiment which I think the peace of Amiens has most fairly proved), that a country, circumstanced as this is, cannot safely abjure a dignified policy, and abdicate its rank among nations. That, with such a country, to be lowly, is not to be sheltered; to be unpresuming, is not necessarily to be safe. In vain we brought our minds to be contented with humble security; in vain did we profess ourselves satisfied to ask no more than that in our humility we should be unmolested—

neque enim miser esse recuso;
Sed precor ut possim tutius esse miser.—

This might be the limit of our wish; but even this modest wish has been denied us. I do not say that the sense of this disappointment, that the conviction daily forcing itself upon our judgment and our feelings that such a system could not last, ought to have precipitated us into war; but I do say, that once engaged in war, from other more pressing causes, these considerations ought to guide us, and I trust they will, both in the conduct of

Digitized by Google

the war itself, and in the conclusion of the peace which our efforts in that war can alone procure to us. I do trust, that we shall now make up our minds to recur to the ancient and established policy of the nation; and that, taught by the experiment which has been tried (perhaps unavoidably, perhaps necessarily, I give no opinion upon that point; but if to the establishment of a conviction of our true interest, I will agree, fortunately upon the whole), we shall look to conduct and terminate this contest on larger and higher principles; shall endeavour to link ourselves anew with the system of Europe, from which events had broken us off; and to raise ourselves again to that commanding situation, to that rank and consideration in Europe, which must always furnish, at once, the best chance of not being attacked, and the best means of speedily repelling any attack that may be made upon us.

Mr. *Fox* rose, and assured the House of his unwillingness to ask for its attention, after the long and able discussion which the important subject before them had already received after the fair and comprehensive manner in which his hon. friend (Mr. Grey) had brought forward his amendment to the address, and after that full investigation which it had met with from the several gentlemen who had spoken both on that and the preceding day, did he not feel it his absolute duty to the people of England, to endeavour at least as well as he was able, to prevail on that House, by the timely interposition of its counsels, to rescue them, not only from a considerable danger, but from the certain misery which must be their doom in any event of war, even the most successful. He should first endeavour to clear the subject from the embarrassment into which it had been thrown by some of those who had supported the address, and particularly by a right hon. friend of his on the bench near him (Mr. T. Grenville), for so he would call him, notwithstanding any difference of political sentiment that might subsist between them, knowing that those differences produced as little alteration on that gentleman's private feelings as they did on his own. Among these differences he should class the opinion to which he was about to refer, and which had also received the support of a right hon. gentleman who had just spoken (Mr. Canning). To the course recommended by those gentlemen it was impossible for him to assent. It was their object to divide the question in debate into two parts, and to consider the justice and expediency of the war as totally separate from the conduct of the ministers which had produced it. With regard to a question of war, it was, generally speaking, like any other question, extremely difficult to be distinguished from the measures by which it had been occasioned. In the case immediately before the House, the distinction for which those gentlemen contended, appeared more particularly inadmissible than in almost any other. Might not the justice of this war, for instance, rest entirely on the refusal of explanation where explanation had been demanded? on the refusal of redress where redress had been demanded? or on the refusal of satisfaction where satisfaction had been demanded? Was it not, therefore, in the very nature of the thing that the whole question, as to such refusal, might, nay to a certainty must, depend on the terms, the time, and the circumstances under which we had asked this explanation, this redress, or this satisfaction?

Putting the case, however, of its being possible to admit that, without such previous inquiry, it could be fairly decided in that House whether a foreign power was right or wrong in its refusal of satisfaction, Mr. Fox called strongly on his right hon. friend on the bench near him, and on others who agreed with that gentleman in opinion, to say whether, considering the manner in which the address expressed itself, they could with any consistency support it? In the language of that address it was affirmed, that his majesty (which, of course, always meant to say his ministers) had been "anxious and uniform in his endeavours to preserve to his people the blessings of peace." For himself, Mr. Fox said, that voting on this awful event, he could not conscientiously agree, that the efforts of his majesty's advisers had been anxious and uniform to preserve peace. From a due examination of the materials before him, he could find no such anxiety or uniformity in their efforts. The very reverse might, in many instances, be inferred; without much further inquiry, therefore, he could not assent to any proposition which should affirm that fact. But if the gentlemen, to whom he alluded, thought differently from him on this point (although he scarcely conceived it possible that they should), and if they were, indeed, ready

Digitized by Google

to declare that the ministers had been uniform in their efforts to preserve peace, would they be equally ready to applaud them for it? they, who had constantly condemned the object itself, and of course all efforts to obtain it. Were they ready, too, to thank the ministers for the manner in which they had conducted the negotiation, if negotiation it could be called? Consistently with all their known ideas, those gentlemen certainly could not support the proposed address.

His right hon. friend (Mr. T. Grenville), indeed, had said, that although he should vote for the address, there was not one word in the amendment in which he did not fully concur, and which he was not ready to vote without any qualification. But, in voting for the address, he expressly guarded himself against any approbation of the conduct of ministers. It was for the sake of unanimity alone that he did not oppose the original motion. Now, when it was evident that neither his right hon. friend, nor any one of those who professed their intention of voting for the address, would venture to do so without qualifying his support of it, by stating that he did not mean to prejudge the question of the conduct of ministers; when it was evident that the original address contained in it many sentiments, with which those, with whom he (Mr. Fox) acted, could not possibly concur; when not one sentiment or expression in the amendment called for the disapprobation of his right hon. friend, or any other individual of that House; and when the ministers themselves were stated by the noble lord opposite (lord Hawkesbury), not even to desire to obtain from the House any declaration of approval for what they had done,—it struck him, that it was in the amendment, and not in the address, that the true view of the subject was contained, and that by voting for the amendment, unanimity, real unanimity, would be most effectually secured. For how stood the question upon this point? One right hon. gentleman under the gallery (Mr. Canning) was desirous of approving the terms of the address for one day; but it was for that one day only; for he had expressly given the House to understand, that there would be an end of his unanimity on the day following. He had already given notice of a motion for papers. The respite to ministers, therefore, would probably not be very long. "I have lately," said Mr. Fox, "been so much out of political life, that I am totally ignorant of the intrigues of parties in this House; but I now see before me a striking instance of the effect produced by the presence of a very eminent and powerful member, who has been unable for a long time to give us the benefit of his attendance. I am ready to acknowledge at all times the advantages to be derived to this House from the assistance of great and splendid abilities; but so much a friend am I to the freedom of debate, that I can hardly think even his presence sufficient to compensate for the loss which we sustain by the silence it imposes on certain hon. gentlemen, who at other times, and in his absence are obliging enough to communicate their sentiments to us. But now they seem to say to each other, "in his awful presence, let us abstain from attacking the ministers; opportunity will soon offer itself; for though he is here to-day, he ma, be away to-morrow, and then—have at them!" Now, Sir, it certainly is an advantage to the debates of this House to learn in the course of them the sentiments of any eminent person. It is always a rational, and sometimes a profitable pleasure, to listen to superior eloquence; but, when these advantages produce the inconvenience of silencing others, whether from the dread of his presence, the fear of losing his good opinion, or from any other cause, no matter what, I own I have doubts whether, on such terms and conditions, his presence or his absence be most desirable. The effect of his presence, indeed, is no less than an abridgment of the freedom of debate, by silencing those gentlemen, who, on other occasions, stand sufficiently forward in our discussions; and who are so desirous of putting us in possession of all their sentiments, that when the question has been, whether the House should or should not adjourn from the Friday to the Monday, or whether any immaterial paper should or should not be laid before us, have never withheld their opinions, although now—such are the effects of a great man's presence—they are absolutely mute.

Mr. Fox then entered upon the consideration of the justice of the war. The address, he observed, pledged the House of Commons to its justice and necessity, for want of due satisfaction from the first consul of France, without its having been shown in what points satisfaction had been demanded, and refused. To make out

Digitized by Google

the want of satisfaction, it was necessary to consider how, and when, and under what circumstances, satisfaction had been demanded, and, above all, whether it had been actually refused. If all this was admitted to be necessary, it was not to be denied that a review of the conduct of ministers became so too; consequently, that to separate the two questions of the justice of the war, and the conduct of ministers, was impossible. Many points had been urged in the course of the debate, which could not be made out from the documents on the table; many points had been partially stated; others had been omitted, though material to the fair examination of the question; and in some instances conclusions had been assumed, which did not logically follow from their premises: these circumstances had given impressions to his mind, different from those of most of the gentlemen who had spoken before him. In all his reading on this subject, he had always found it admitted, that in disputes between states, a clear distinction was established between insults and injuries. He had uniformly understood that insult, by itself, was no ground whatever for hostility. It was not the insult that was the just ground of war, but the refusal of satisfaction for insult, after representation duly made, and satisfaction demanded. This was, indeed, a true and just ground for war. It followed, therefore, that every insult was to be considered with reference to a demand and a refusal, and this only to a formal demand and a refusal. With regard to an injury actually sustained, the case was not exactly the same. The just and laudable course to follow, in the case of an injury sustained, was certainly first to demand redress; but it sometimes happened, that the injury was of such a nature as to be almost incapable of the redress immediately applicable to it; of such a nature, that while a country was demanding reparation, it was losing the opportunity of obtaining it; in which case, and particularly if the redress happened to be in our own hands, it became fit to use the means which nature and fortune had placed within our reach.

What he should first consider, therefore, was, the conduct which France had held towards other states, so far as such conduct was to be presumed evidence of hostile designs against this country. Every act of injustice of this nature, which France had been guilty of since the peace of Amiens, could not be fairly adduced, with reference to its effect upon ourselves, as constituting a just ground for war. "I hope," said Mr. Fox, "that I shall not be thought to take unnecessarily nice distinctions, when I say, that some acts may be done by one country against another, which, although in the abstract highly unjust and injurious, are not nevertheless acts so directly tending to the injury of a third power, as to amount to a proof of hostile views against that third power, and therefore to call for its interference; neither is it necessary, on the other hand, that you should be bound by specific treaty, to guarantee any particular state against the aggrandizement of its neighbour, in order to be intitled to interfere for its defence. Undoubtedly you may interfere to oppose such aggrandizement, upon the general principles of policy, which include prudence; and upon the first principle which governs states as well as individuals, the principle of self-defence. I go further, and say, that you are authorized by the rank you hold, and I trust you will continue to hold, in the scale of nations, to interfere and to prevent injustice and oppression by a great towards a smaller state, whenever it is offered. This I take to be a ground of just interference with foreign powers, regulated always by the prospect of success, and by that prudence which would abstain from any interference at all, when it could only injure the party it was intended to serve: but these premises do not bring us to the conclusion which it seemed the object of the noble lord (Hawkesbury) to enforce in his speech yesterday, namely, "that whenever any neighbouring power has attempted aggrandizement, and has accomplished her object, either by the operation of war, or by other means, such aggrandizement is necessarily to be taken as an act of malevolence towards ourselves; and that although we will not interfere to prevent the aggrandizement while it is going on, it may be fit to reserve the right of interfering until some other time, and then to bring forward a question upon it on the ground of its being a direct injury to ourselves." Such a doctrine has never yet been insisted upon in any of the transactions which have taken place among the European powers. Among the various instances of the aggression of great states, in modern times, we have the two divisions of Poland, which, even

Digitized by Google

in comparison with any thing we have since seen, still retain a certain pre-eminence in profligacy. Can any man deny that, on the first division of Poland, France and England might have united to prevent that most atrocious act of injustice? Will any man say that such an union, for such a purpose, would not have been laudable? or rather was it not the duty of these independent nations to unite upon the common principles of justice against the other three dividing and spoliating powers, and tell them, "You are doing an act, dreadful in itself, most dangerous in its consequences, most pernicious in its precedent; and although neither of us has any treaty or connexion with Poland, we will prevent the division you are about to make of that kingdom." No man will deny the justice of such an interference. But, on the other hand, if we had afterwards, upon some other point which had no connexion with this subject, gone to war with Russia or Austria, or Prussia, would it not have been extravagant for us to have said, "We never remonstrated against the partition of Poland, while the thing was doing, because, at that time, you had given us no direct cause of offence; but now that we have a quarrel with you, we shall insist on that act as evidence of your original malice against us."

It was under this view, therefore, that Mr. Fox now proposed to consider the general conduct of France towards other states since the treaty of Amiens. First, however, he should consider that treaty not in its detail, but in its principle. The principle on which he had supported that treaty, and on which many other members of parliament had supported it, was not that the state of Europe, as arranged by its stipulations, was satisfactory—not that he had, at the time of making it, much reliance on the good faith, still less on the moderation of France, but upon a feeling that, under all the circumstances, it was better to take the opportunity which then offered of putting an end to the calamities of war. It was true that we did accept an imperfect security on concluding the treaty of Amiens. This was a truth which all men felt; but it was a truth by no means peculiar to that treaty—it had happened in many treaties before, and would happen again. Imperfect security was common to all engagements in almost every condition of society; and nothing short of a state of absolute perfection in all things, which none but a lunatic was extravagant enough to expect, would justify the hope of perfect security in a treaty. All that could rationally be looked forward to was probable security; that is to say, the security which arises from its being the interest of the other contracting party not to break their engagements. It was absurd to calculate upon more. If all nations were to be apprehensive that, unless they were perfectly secure, they enjoyed no security whatever, and fancying themselves, therefore, in danger, were to go to war in search of absolute security, he was afraid there would be but little peace in the world. If Great Britain had pursued this policy, the few intervals of peace she had had would never have taken place, and the last century would have presented one uninterrupted state of war; but we had from time to time, and, as he thought, prudently, been content to take probable security for the continuance of peace. This he took to have been the principle of the treaty in question. Did we therefore relinquish our right to interfere in the affairs of Holland? Certainly not: for, independently of general principles, there are express provisions to the contrary in the treaty. Did we relinquish our right to interfere in the affairs of Switzerland? Certainly not—Or in the affairs of Naples? or of Turkey? or in those of any other part of the globe? Certainly not. That treaty precluded us in no instance from acting upon the system which became a great and generous nation, or from taking any reasonable opportunity that offered for succouring the distresses of others, and protecting the smaller states.

To apply, therefore, this general conduct of France since the treaty of Amiens, to the question of English grievances—Among the alleged aggressions of France, much stress had been laid upon her conduct relative to the German indemnities. Mr. Fox professed himself not to feel on that subject any greater degree of indignation towards the government of France than he felt towards all the other governments who were principles in that transaction. Every one of them had carried through that system in a manner which had most properly called forth the animadversions of the noble lord. He had himself always reprobated the system of indemnity and compensation. It was, and could be no other than, a system of com-

Digitized by Google

mon rapine. To take indemnities from the territories of other states by any authority than that of the rightful possessors, was, in one word, robbery. On this point his opinion had been uniform. With regard, however, to this principle of compensation, it was to be recollected, that it had originated with the treaty of Luneville; it had then been agreed upon by the two belligerent powers, neither of whom would grant any compensation to the other out of its own territory or possessions. The burthen, therefore, was to fall upon the German states. The principle had been adopted with a view to a long continuance of the settlement under it; and France, surely, was not more to blame than other powers in agreeing to those terms, for the sake of putting an end to further litigation. Into the question of right he would not enter; but to complain that Austria was a loser by it, was saying very little. It was impossible it could have been otherwise. Austria must necessarily have been a loser, from the circumstances attending the treaty of Campo Formio, and the subsequent renewal of the war. It was useless to discuss who was to blame for that renewal; but no man who recollected the unsuccessful campaigns of Austria, and, on the other hand, the successful campaigns of Buonaparté, could doubt that she must be the loser. To say that she was so, therefore, was saying no more than that an unsuccessful party in a contest will be a loser by that contest. It was, however, a material part of this case of the indemnities, that Russia was joined with France to carry them through. Whatever blame, therefore, belonged to the transaction, must be shared equally between them.

With respect to Piedmont, at the time of the treaty of Amiens it was, to all intents and purposes, a part of France: it constituted the 27th military Arrondissement. It belonged to France as effectually as Gibraltar belongs to us. At the time of the civil annexation, which is all that has taken place since the treaty, and which *is* the present subject of complaint, the name only was changed. The different rulers of France, since the revolution, have had the folly to change the names of every thing, and instead of the 27th military Arrondissement, Piedmont is now called the department of the Po. It was but giving two names to the same thing. Whether Piedmont ought to belong to France—whether it ought not to be restored to the King of Sardinia—were not questions for us to enter into at the present time. To all controversies of this sort there must be some given period: that period naturally would be the treaty. What passed on this subject between the two contracting parties at the preliminary treaty was to be compared with what had been assented to afterwards. Whatever had been stipulated for on the signature of the preliminaries, we had a right to insist upon, and whatever had been done contrary to those stipulations, it was our business to object to before the signature of the definitive treaty; but, after its signature, we had no right to complain of what had been done in the interim between the two. It was notorious, that at the conclusion of the treaty, Piedmont, although not called by the name of the department of the Po, was to all intents and purposes a province of France.

The next question was, the transaction respecting Switzerland; a transaction of a very different nature. The French government was bound by treaty, as well as by every principle of justice, to withdraw their troops from Switzerland, to leave that country to itself, even with the miserable government which they had established in it, and to respect its independence. During their dominion in that country they had formed a constitution there utterly repugnant to the principles, and odious to the feelings, of the people. The moment their troops were withdrawn, the people of Switzerland, by an insurrection founded on the truest principles of justice, rose and overturned that constitution. The French government interposed to restore it, and, bad as the system was, the manner of their interfering to restore it, was, if possible, worse. It has terminated, however, and so far the insurrection has been fortunate, in the establishment of a system rather more congenial with the popular sentiments, and appearing, at least, to possess some portion of freedom; since, in the democratic cantons, where the opposition to France first began, the people had very generally elected to their highest offices those who had been the most active in promoting it, and who had most helped to produce the subversion of the government which had been imposed upon them. This violent act of injustice on the part of France no man contemplated with more indignation than Mr. Fox. But was it, after all, an act particularly and peculiarly directed against

Digitized by Google

Great Britain? He hardly knew whether he dared to speak upon this subject, since there were so many persons, both in and out of that House, who, whenever the name of the first consul was mentioned, thought that nothing too violent could be said against him, and that nothing he did, or ever could do, was fit to be endured. Was there, however, in this act of aggrandizement on the part of Buonaparté, any ingredient which made it appear, that it was meant by him to operate against Great Britain? Will any man believe that his sending troops into Switzerland was only with the view of testifying his aversion to this country? It may be said, indeed, that it was so meant, because it was an act of aggrandizement on the part of France, and every such act must be done with a view of hurting Great Britain: this, however, was pushing the construction upon human action to an outrageous degree; to a degree in which it could be supported upon no sound principle. It might with equal justice be argued, that every improvement in the internal condition of France, whether in her agriculture, her manufactures, her commerce, or her revenues, is contributory to her aggrandizement, and therefore intentionally injurious to us. It might equally be said, that the improvements of Brest, of Boulogne, or any other of her ports or harbours, are carried on, not merely for the interest of France, but with an immediate view to the prejudice of Great Britain. If this principle were true, we should be under the necessity of making war on France, and not only on France, but on every other power that attempted to better its condition by any means. What is worse, we could never make peace. France must be exterminated, were the principle true, that every thing she does for the increase of her own strength, is intended hostilely towards Great Britain. Upon the subject of Switzerland, however, what was there to have been done? Was it right to go to war about it? His answer would be, *primâ facie*, No! He would not say that circumstances might not have happened to justify our going to war; indeed, he thought the acts of France against Switzerland would have been a sufficient justification for it, if policy had permitted; all he was then contending for was, that the conduct of France in this instance, oppressive and tyrannical as it was, could not be taken as an act of hostility against us. He owned that for himself he had always been most anxious that this country should avoid a war on account of Switzerland. Under the then peculiarly unfavourable circumstances of Europe, he had a thorough conviction that we could not make such a war with any effect. Even if those circumstances had been less unfavourable, he should have deprecated the war, although professedly for the purpose of assisting the struggles of that gallant people for their liberties. Even if we could have got Austria to join us, was it sure that that power, was it *quite* sure that we ourselves, would have had no other object in view than the restoration of Switzerland to her independence? Could such professions, on the part of Austria, be any thing but rank hypocrisy? However good the cause, when that cause was to be only the pretence for war, and was put forward to conceal other purposes, he should be very little disposed to join in it. He could not, for this reason, attend much to the high language which was held about Switzerland; or to other topics which appeared to be introduced into the discussions, only to swell the catalogue of the crimes of France, and give a colour of popularity to the war. That Switzerland could not be one of the objects of the war, was proved by the very negotiation which had just been so unfortunately concluded. It appeared clearly from the correspondence, that if Lord Whitworth's last *ultimatum* had been acceded to, poor Switzerland would have been forgotten, and left to her fate!

Mr. Fox then proceeded to what he called a still more serious case; he meant the intolerable injustice with which France had treated the republic of Holland. Their conduct in this respect was of a nature that called for the expression of his warmest reprobation. It was one of those acts to which, the stronger the words in which it should be described, the more applicable would they be to its guilt. It was an act to be equalled by nothing but those which prevailed in countries where a difference of colour seemed to have shut up the hearts of men, and extinguished every sentiment of compassion. "Were I a master of the use of colours," said Mr. Fox, "and could paint with skill, I would take the darkest to delineate the conduct of France towards Holland. It certainly has been worse treated by her than any other country whatever. Holland has not only suffered all the evils of war which are unavoidable;

Digitized by Google

but when peace came, to turn that country, in defiance of a positive treaty with her, into a *depôt* for French troops, for the mere purpose, I sincerely believe, of making the Dutch pay the expense of maintaining them, was an act no less despicable for its meanness, than hateful for its atrocity." Now, Holland had been spoken of by an hon. gentleman as if it were to be considered as a kind of outpost for France, by which she could more readily annoy Great Britain. How far that might be true, he would not then discuss; but even those who pretended to the best knowledge of the dispositions and intentions of Buonaparté, would hardly say, that they believed the sending these troops to Holland had any reference whatever to Great Britain. For his part, he verily believed it was for the sole purpose of having them fed and clothed at the expense of Holland. It was a refinement in reasoning which he could not understand, to contend that they were brought there, not for present use, but for the purpose of being employed at some other period, when it might be done to better advantage; that they were kept there as a sort of stratagem, in order to prevent this country from taking an alarm when their design of invading us should be ripe. This, however, he would tell the ministers,—that it was their duty to have remonstrated against the occupation of Holland; and in remonstrating, to have taken the highest ground. Had ministers done so, they would have had the feelings of the Dutch nation with them, and the opinion and good wishes of Europe. What ought to have been their precise course it was not for him to tell them; but a direct and spirited remonstrance on the affairs of Holland specifically, not deferred until after his majesty's message to parliament, but immediately on the arrival of lord Whitworth to Paris, ought to have been presented to the French government. This representation should have been made not privately, not couched in peevish language,—such was always beneath the dignity of a great nation, and never could answer any good purpose,—but in an open, candid, manly remonstrance; in terms fit to be published in every part of the globe, as the language of an independent and powerful people. He could not, indeed, undertake to answer positively for the success of such a measure. But it was his firm belief that, if Great Britain had only presented a remonstrance, and had done so without any menace of declaring war in case of refusal, such an endeavour would have had a favourable effect on the affairs of Holland, on the general opinion of Europe, and on the subsequent conduct of France herself.

These material consequences, he was confident, might have been produced if the ministers had taken the proper time for remonstrating. All that they now appear to have done is to have mentioned Holland to the first consul! Now, it was fair to observe, that if this was all they thought proper to do, they had received in return all that they were entitled to expect. They had the assurances of the first consul that he would evacuate Holland as soon as the discussions between the two governments should be terminated. These promises were, at least, fair: and, after the manner in which they had interfered, promises were all the ministers could look for.

The conduct of the French government in thus occupying Holland with their troops, was no less unjust, and eventually, he trusted, would prove no less unwise and impolitic than the attempt to reduce St. Domingo to its former condition of servitude. It had been said, that the expedition to St. Domingo was no affair of ours; that the principles of mere humanity or the consideration of what might turn out to the advantage of the inhabitants of that devoted island, gave us no right to interpose on that occasion. Supposing this country, indeed, to be guided by the dry dis-social principle of self-interest alone, Mr. Fox agreed that that expedition gave us not the smallest reason to complain. So far he agreed with the ministers, and differed from a right hon. gentleman upon the floor (Mr. Windham); that expedition, on the contrary, he conceived to have been one of the most absurd and foolish ever undertaken for the interests of France herself. Not only it was not dangerous to this country, but in one view it had been highly advantageous; since it had employed the forces of France, occupied her attention, and weakened her resources. This had been done without bringing her any benefit in return, since every one saw that the object of the expedition had been lost; it was lost chiefly from the conduct which had been observed towards the blacks, and particularly towards Toussaint, by the person who had the command in that

Digitized by Google

island; a conduct which he considered as implicating and forming a material blot in the character of Buonaparté himself. Here Mr. Fox took occasion to regret the little attention which was paid to these events in England, under the vulgar supposition of their being foreign to British interests; to condemn the fatal weakness which prevailed over the chief part of mankind, rendering them indifferent to the fate of others at a distance; and to reprobate that still more inexcusable apathy, the true source of the wickedness with which all countries, without exception, had treated the blacks, and which seemed to deaden the heart of man to the sufferings of those of his species who happened not to resemble him in complexion. He considered it as a great reproach to this country not to have seized the very first moment of a good understanding with France, to concert measures with her for the extirpation of that dreadful evil, that disgrace to human nature, the slave trade—this he should always consider and lament as a valuable opportunity lost, on a most interesting and important subject.

The last transaction to be considered, under this first head of complaint, was the taking possession of Parma and Placentia. It did not appear by any thing known to the public, whether or not those territories were allotted to France, by any treaty which existed previous to the treaty with us. He believed that the reversion of them to France was insured by a treaty with Spain, entered into during the life of the late duke. It was his opinion, however, under all the circumstances of the rest of the continent, that this was now become a matter of very inferior importance. He adverted to it rather as a subject of regret, than as constituting a ground of war. Most of the others he had mentioned were of the same description: all were subjects of regret, many of them of reproach; although, in his judgment, nothing was of any comparative weight when placed against the transactions in regard to Holland.

Mr. Fox next proceeded to those subjects which constituted the second class of complaints against France, those, namely, which were to be considered under the head of insults, contradistinguished from actual injuries. This question included one of a very wide and general nature, namely, how far the language which the two countries had held towards each other was to be considered as forming a just ground of reciprocal hostility. No one who knew any thing of the constitution of England, or the spirit and temper of its people, could expect that we should condescend even to discuss a proposition with France, which had for its object any diminution of the liberty of the press. This great privilege, he, of all men, was not likely to be suspected of a disposition to surrender. If he would not surrender it to please the government of his own country, much less would he consent to do so for the sake of pleasing the government of any other. This point he would not condescend to argue—it was entirely out of all question. The proposition of France, however, on this head, whatever it may have been, was rejected by us, and in that rejection France acquiesced. Grossly absurd, therefore, as such a proposition was, and founded in complete ignorance of the nature of our constitution, it could not now be considered any farther as an insult, or as the evidence of a hostile mind actually existing. It was true, that out of the liberty, or rather out of the abuse of the liberty of the press, many partial evils, forming just ground of mutual complaint between the two countries, might arise. They had arisen in the present case. Certain publications had produced, what it was natural for them to produce in the minds of nine people out of ten, namely, disgust and irritation. This feeling had been strongly excited on both sides, and, as it appeared, with mutual and very successful industry. It was, indeed, a feeling of bitterness and animosity, which tended in a great measure to undo the good effects of peace, and prepare the minds of the people in both countries for the renewal of the war. Great and serious, however, as was this mischief, still he could not consent to see the freedom of the press abridged; but if abuse was to go on, it was his earnest wish that hostilities at least between the two countries should be confined to the newspapers. This species of warfare, if not the most glorious, was undoubtedly the safest. In the first of poems by the first of poets, it had been recommended to two combatants just preparing to engage in battle; and that poet, who was no less a man than Homer, put his advice into the mouth of the goddess of wisdom herself—"Put up your swords," she says, "and then abuse each other as long as you please." "Such was the advice,"

Digitized by Google

plaint advanced by the French government, said Mr. Fox, "I gave in this House to both countries long ago. Would to God it had been followed! for weak, foolish, and contemptible as abuse may be, it most certainly is a lesser calamity than war." Such a species of warfare, was one in which neither party was likely to experience any failure of ammunition. This seemed to have been regularly imported, and in sufficient quantities, from both countries. The chief consul complains that, during a certain period, every packet-boat that passed from Dover to Calais, brought over a cargo of libels. Now, this might appear a curious manner of freighting vessels, but it was singular enough that the glorious poet, quoted before, should have imagined the very same thing; for, in another part of the Iliad, upon a similar occasion, he says, "as to abuse, you may have a ship-load of it if you please!" We may conclude, therefore, that the exportation of libels from one country to another was of very ancient practice, and that Homer spoke literally and not figuratively, unless we can suppose him to have had the gift of prescience as to the contents of the packet-boats which crossed during the last summer from Dover to Calais.

Returning to the serious part of this subject. Mr. Fox said, that although no ground for war, this violent abuse was fit matter of complaint on both sides. It was true, that the ministers of this country might state a wide difference in the case of libels between the two countries, and might allege that the ministers of France had the means of restraining them, while no such power existed in Great Britain. Literally speaking, this certainly was true; and God forbid that it should be otherwise! but was there any man who heard him who could not give some guess at least how matters of this sort were always managed even here? Was there any news-writer really so unacquainted with proceedings of this nature, as not to know that there were certain modes of abuse, which according to their direction against particular persons, were more or less agreeable to the king's ministers? Were there really no means for them to come to any understanding with those ministers on such a subject? He could not believe there were many persons who heard him of such a primitive simplicity as not to be in the least aware of what he was adverting to; nor could the French be quite so ignorant as to believe, where they see newspapers teeming with incessant abuse of a foreign power for months together, that it is or that it can be, the serious wish of ministers to prevent it; or that if, they fail, it is for want of the means of accomplishing such an object. They will scarcely be prevailed upon to believe that the only influence, possessed by a minister of state over the newspapers, is derived from a preference shown by them to one editor over another in the sending advertisements, or communicating articles of public information. Even this, however, is considerable, when the value of such information to the public and consequently to the editor is taken into the account. A French minister, too, on his part, might probably reply to a remonstrance from us in a similar manner. He might lament the necessity they were under in France of restraining the liberty of the press. He might profess the highest admiration of that liberty, and the greatest reluctance to fetter it by any restrictions, assuring us, that their only motive was the protection of their own internal government from the effects of libels, but that they had too high a respect for the press to think of interfering with its privileges any farther. He might then call on us to exercise the power we possess by the alien act to stop at least the source of some of those libels; and to our answer that the powers of that act are applicable only to foreigners who should attempt disturbances against the government at home, and not to such as should attempt any thing against those of foreign states, he might retort upon us—"This, too, is the only power we can exercise over our own press. We detest all infringements of its liberties as well as you. We detest the libelling system as much as you do. We wish it were abrogated altogether, but we have not the means. All the power we exercise over the press is limited to the security of our own domestic tranquillity." Such might be the arguments on both sides, and much, indeed, was it to be lamented that the facts in this case were such as not only to have a tendency to create, but actually to have created, in France as well as in England, that degree of soreness and irritation, which, in his opinion, had had so large a share in accelerating the present crisis.

This led him to the consideration of another alleged insult, namely, the com-

Digitized by Google

ment on the subject of the protection afforded by us to certain French refugees. The demand to send them away Mr. Fox reprobated in the strongest terms. It was his sentiment, he said, that let a man, be he a native of France, of England, or of any other country, observe but the duties of good neighbourhood and submission to the laws, he ought never to be molested for his opinions, in what corner of the world soever he should retire for refuge. Crimes alone could bring him under the judicial cognizance of any just government. To deny any man, be his condition or rank what it might, or coming from whatever part of the globe, the rights of hospitality for his political principles, would be cruel, cowardly, and totally unworthy of the British character. "The demand," said Mr. Fox, "that we should send out of this country persons obnoxious to the government of France, is made upon a most false and most dangerous principle. If it could be so established between the two states, that we should send away from England every person whom it might please the French government to call a rebel; and that reciprocally to please us, France should send away every person obnoxious to the ministers of this country; and if it were possible to conceive the still further extension of this principle among the other governments of Europe, every unfortunate man, who might either from sentiment, connexion, or accident, have been led or driven into some act of resistance, would be exposed to the same dangers, and incur the same penalties, as if he had been taken in actual arms against his country. The union of the two governments of England and France would effectually preclude him from any asylum any where, and would hunt him from the face of the globe. To give up men of this description, therefore, would be the worst and basest act I am capable of conceiving. No man, I believe, is more a lover of peace than I am. No one, perhaps,—and I hope not to be suspected at this time of bearing hard upon an unfortunate and fallen family, when I say it—no one, perhaps, politically speaking, has less respect than I have for the house of Bourbon; yet I am ready to declare, that for that family, nay, for the worst prince of that family, if among them there should be a bad one, I should be ready to draw my sword and to go to war, rather than comply with a demand to withdraw from him the hospitality to which he had trusted. I say this with regard to persons against whom no crime is alleged; there certainly, however, does prevail at Paris, how justly I know not, a belief, or a strong suspicion, that several persons concerned in the plot against the first consul's life, have not only found protection in England, but are carrying on further intrigues against the peace of the two countries. Whether this opinion be well or ill founded, I am ignorant, and indeed should be very slow to believe it (for God knows I am not remarkably credulous in favour of assertions unaccompanied by evidence), but there exists undoubtedly such an opinion, and that certain individuals, to the number of three, now actually in England or very lately so, were concerned in an attempt on the life of Buonaparté. Am I to judge these men guilty of this crime because they are accused of it? God forbid! But when charges of such a nature are brought against individuals by name, and those individuals are within our reach, I think it but due to all parties, to those who are the objects of the charge as well as those who prefer it, that some inquiry should take place into the fact, and that the result, whatever it may be, should be fairly represented and made known. This is a duty we owe not only to France, but to ourselves; for the hostility of a great and generous nation gives no countenance to crimes, even against its worst enemies."

Mr. Fox then proceeded to advert to other topics of complaint under the head of insults, particularly a declaration of the first consul in his speech to the Swiss deputies. It is stated, that in that speech the Swiss were directed by him to beware of forming any connexion with England. Although this declaration made no part of the official charges against France, at which he greatly wondered, Mr. Fox considered it as one of the strongest and most important grounds of complaint, of any which had been adduced. Where the first magistrate of a powerful nation tells another country, that it must have nothing to do with a third, it is an offence which ought to be made the subject of a grave and serious remonstrance. As it was only in the newspapers that he had read this fact, it might possibly not be true: but if it were true, if the first consul had really told the people of Switzerland that they must have no connexion or communication with Great Britain, he had no

Digitized by Google

difficulty in saying, that it ought to have been distinctly complained of, and explanation demanded of the French government. One of two things would have followed had this course been taken; if the words had not been used, they would have been disavowed, and so we should have received complete satisfaction; if they had been used, they might have been atoned for by an apology, and we should thus have derived the benefit of teaching the first consul the propriety of abstaining in future from such offensive language.

Two other points, applicable to this branch of the subject, remained to be considered; the one regarded an expression in the *Exposé* of the chief consul to the legislative body of the state of the republic: it is there said, that "England alone is not able to contend against France." All expressions of this sort were highly to be condemned. Offensive comparisons serve only to create or inflame a spirit of mutual jealousy and national hatred. In his opinion, it would be much wiser to treat them with contempt. Of this, however, he was perfectly sure, that if they were to be noticed at all, they ought to be made the ground of an immediate demand for satisfaction; it was utterly wrong to suffer them to lie rankling in the minds of the people, and afterwards to bring them forward for purposes of mere irritation. The other point was the passage alluded to in the official papers on Sebastiani's report. With respect to certain expressions in that report, undoubtedly they contained very insulting matter, even if there were no other objection to it. Both the matter itself and the manner of expressing it, were highly injurious and unmanly. In one part of this report, a charge is brought forward against general Steward for incapacity: such charges are indecent enough, when individuals only are the authors of them; but when governments adopt them with a view to wound the feelings of those who have no adequate means of resenting it, their conduct is to the highest degree unpardonable. And what can be more galling to the feelings of a man, especially of a military man, than to hold him out as incapable of his duty? Fortunately, in the present instance, this accusation of incapacity fell upon a worthy and distinguished officer, whose character stood too high in the service to be affected by such an imputation. But there was another and a more serious charge, a charge of giving encouragement to assassination, which assuredly demanded from the king's ministers the most prompt and vigorous remonstrance to the French government.

Such were briefly, Mr. Fox said, the complaints, and such had been the manner in which the king's ministers had treated those complaints, on the two heads on which he had argued, namely, the conduct of France towards foreign states, and the instances of insult, as distinguished from injuries, offered to us by the use of offensive language. The next subject of difference was that of their seizing our ships and detaining our property, and the refusal to grant an adequate redress. In judging of these offences, it is fit first to ascertain how far they have arisen out of the operation of hostile laws, and how far out of the partiality of their application. Most of the French laws on this subject Mr. Fox understood to have been passed during the heats of the Revolution, and to be still retained: in this case the complaint was properly against the existence of such laws; laws, to the last degree unwise and impolitic. It was, indeed, highly absurd in France, with the desire to become a commercial nation, to make or to continue laws so inimical to the growth of commerce; but at the same time he must assert the right, not of France alone, but of every independent state in the world, and most emphatically of Great Britain, who stood more in need of indulgence on this subject than perhaps any other nation — the absolute and uncontrollable right, where no treaties exist to the contrary, to establish such exclusive laws for the protection of their commerce as they may think fit, and to put every prohibition they please upon the merchandize and shipping of other states. This was a right, which, whether well or ill understood, judiciously or indiscreetly made use of, it never could be disputed was inherent in every independent nation. Great Britain had always acted on these principles. Could it be pretended that any other power had carried them farther? Great Britain, it would be confessed, had an equal, if not a superior degree of interest in the general success of commerce, to any other nation in Europe, and yet we had passed many laws with regard to our own, the object of which was the total exclusion of all other states from a participation of its benefits. This was eminently the case in the act of navigation,

Digitized by Google

which secured to us the monopoly of the West India trade: that act, which had been passed under the protectorate of Cromwell, was found to agree so well with all the principles of our commercial policy, that it was afterwards persevered in by the family who were restored to the throne; and to a steady perseverance in it, a great part of our commercial and naval ascendancy was owing. Of the general principle, therefore, of protection by exclusive regulations, we had no right to complain. If the injuries offered to individuals had arisen from the nature of the laws of France, they were out of the present consideration: but if those individuals had suffered injuries contrary to the laws of France, or inconsistent with the provisions of any subsisting treaty, it was the business of government to procure redress. Of all the grounds of remonstrance which could exist, an insult or injury offered to a British subject, was that, in which, above all others, they would be sure of support: this matter, therefore, ought to have been wholly left out of the king's declaration, for it was owing to the laches of the king's ministers if redress were not obtained; and if redress were obtained, the complaint ought not to have been mentioned.

Next came the subject of the commercial commissioners; and here Mr. Fox had no difficulty in saying, that as it appeared to him by the papers, that the persons who were sent hither under colour and pretence of being commercial commissioners, were military men, and in effect no better than spies, it was a shameful attempt to impose upon us for a most mischievous purpose; and therefore there was but one course to be pursued, namely, that of sending them out of this country immediately, and immediately also (for this was not a matter for delay) applying to France for explanation and satisfaction, for having sent them here under such false colours, and for such disguised objects. It might be asked why he, who appeared so strenuous upon this matter, and who had of late been so regular in his attendance in parliament, had never mentioned this circumstance before. His reason was, simply, that he did not know it before; and it appeared to him that ministers, by never naming it in parliament when all the facts were in their possession, did not think it a matter worthy of parliamentary investigation. He therefore could have no duty to perform upon the subject, because he knew nothing of the transaction; but if ministers knew of such an act of aggression, it was their duty instantly, not only to represent the matter, but to remonstrate upon it, and to demand satisfaction of France.

With regard to the manifesto which appeared in one of the Hamburgh journals, Mr. Fox conceived that there was the less necessity for mentioning it as a cause for war, since there had been a promise to disavow it on the part of the French government. The negotiation had unfortunately broken off before that promise could be carried into effect; but the paper itself had been disavowed by Talleyrand distinctly; an assurance was given to our ambassador that the French government had not authorized the publication by their minister at Hamburgh; that his conduct should be strictly inquired into, and that full reparation should be given us. With regard to the contents of that paper, undoubtedly they were highly offensive. But what he objected to chiefly was, the manner of its publication. If it were true (as it had been stated) that the French minister did actually insist on having it inserted by an order from the senate, it was impossible to conceive a more gross violation of the freedom of an independent state. We complain of this, and very properly. France says she will disavow it. In consequence of the rupture of the negotiation, that promise certainly was left unperformed; but from all that had passed on the subject before, there was no reason to think that it would not have been kept.

The language of the first consul in his interviews with our ambassador had been also the subject of much discussion. It seemed by many gentlemen to be considered as carrying with it such decisive proofs of a general spirit of hostility, as to completely justify the renewal of actual hostilities on our part. One public conversation at the Thuilleries, in particular, was triumphantly held up in support of that opinion. This conversation had been variously related, and certainly the accounts of several persons, present at the time when it took place, represent the language used very differently from the manner in which it is stated in the papers on the table. He thought it, indeed, a great misfortune that lord Whitworth should have laid so much stress on the unfavourable nature of any verbal communication. He spoke this with reference to lord Whitworth's private inter-

Digitized by Google

view with the first consul. For that noble lord, personally, Mr. Fox professed great esteem, and a high opinion both of his judgment and his probity; but all men knew how difficult it was to retain in the memory every minute particular of a conversation of two hours, when no part of it was reduced into writing at the time. But whatever might have been the turn of it, it was worth considering, whether the offence given by the terms of such a conversation might not be overbalanced by the advantage of discovering the intentions of an enemy from his own intemperate language.

Having thus gone through the various charges advanced against the government of France by his majesty's ministers, as motives to war under the head of insult, he would observe, that whatever expressions were used by the chief consul, whether they were more or less favourable to pacification, it must always be remembered that words are very fleeting, very liable to misconception, and to be imperfectly reported; that, in short, they are of little or no value, except when they are accompanied by acts; but whatever interpretation these words of the first consul might really bear, certainly those of the right hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Addington), on opening the budget, gave to this country fair hopes that we were in a state of profound peace. The members of that House could not have forgotten the language he used, when, at the close of the last year, he laid before them a flattering picture of the commercial prosperity of the country. From no part of his language on that occasion was it possible to draw any other inference, than that he wished the House to believe that there "was not the least room to apprehend any interruption of the peace." So the right hon. gentleman's expressions had been generally understood by those who heard them. So they had been understood by the public. This opinion had been confirmed by facts infinitely stronger than the recollection of any member of that House; for, in addition to their speeches, ministers sent orders to give up the Cape of Good Hope a second time. They also manifested their disposition to surrender Malta according to the treaty. This was not only speaking but acting as if we were in a state of profound peace, for he would not suppose that ministers could be weak enough to give those orders when they had any real apprehension that the peace could not be maintained. Why did he insist so much upon this point? It was to anticipate an answer, and to guard against a species of reasoning, which he allowed to be fair in general, but which he denied to be applicable to the present subject, considered under the circumstances which had led to his majesty's message on the 8th of March. It had been argued, and in many cases it might be argued fairly, that a variety of subjects of complaint might exist between two nations, not one of which standing by itself would constitute a sufficient cause for war; but that these subjects of complaint, when accumulated together, might very justly become so. It was inferred from hence, that each article being, of itself, just ground of complaint, although not so great as to justify us in proceeding to extremities, might be borne separately, but that the accumulation of them was intolerable. He had not forgotten the old proverb, that "It is the last ounce which breaks the horse's back;"—and certainly a scale may be so nicely balanced that a feather more or less would turn it. "But if ministers were so enormously loaded with the injuries of their country, that another ounce would have broken their backs, and if at Christmas their difficulties were so nicely balanced that a feather would turn the scale, I tell them," said Mr. Fox, "that they ought not to have declared that 'they saw no ground for apprehending 'war;' for by saying so, they deluded their country. If the French had accumulated together such a mass of insults and outrages as to make ministers see that the period was coming at which they could no longer be endured, they are highly criminal in having flattered the nation so continually with the hopes of peace; and are guilty of the ruin and misery which has ensued from it to so many unfortunate individuals."

Mr. Fox came next to the great article on which the war rested, namely, Malta. Before, however, he considered any of the arguments which respected the immediate state of the question relative to Malta, he thought it necessary to advert to, and to express his dissent from, some general opinions on this subject which had been advanced during the discussion. He could manifest his own no better, perhaps, than by following the course and order of the expressions which had been used by a learned gentleman (Mr.

Digitized by Google

Dallas) who had spoken for the first time on that day, and on the acquisition of whose talents he congratulated the House; talents, the display of which was not unexpected to him, who had had an opportunity of admiring them on a great occasion in another place.* In giving his vote for the present address, the learned gentleman had vindicated the expediency of the war, as it was for Malta; as it was not for Malta alone, but for Egypt; as it was not for Egypt alone, but for India; as it was not for India alone, but for the vital interests of Great Britain. Every one of these four propositions Mr. Fox denied; he denied that Malta was worth a war by itself; he denied that Malta was worth it as essential to the security of Egypt; he denied that Egypt was essential to the security of India; he denied that our Indian possessions, with all their vast importance, which he knew and acknowledged as much as any man, were essential to the vital interests of Great Britain. All these points had been thoroughly discussed in the debates on the preliminary and definitive treaties. Not having himself much geographical knowledge applicable to the question of the importance of Malta to this country, he would rest his opinion upon authorities infinitely greater than his own on all such subjects, and most emphatically so on the present. He would not examine at that time the opinion given in great detail by a gallant friend of his (general Maitland), during that debate; nor wherein it differed from that which he had formerly delivered; but he remembered well that on the discussion of the definitive treaty, authorities no less than those of lord St. Vincent and lord Nelson were produced to prove that Malta was not a convenient station for the protection either of Egypt or the Levant, nor worth the continuance of war for the sake of obtaining a commanding influence in the Mediterranean; he also recollected one of the most able defenders of the peace of Amiens (Mr. Pitt), while he was arguing upon the necessity of making some cessions with a view to obtain peace, stating, that if it were put to him whether those cessions should be in the East Indies, in the West Indies, or the Mediterranean, he would answer—"in the Mediterranean." Mr. Fox confessed himself to have been of a different opinion, and that he should have preferred Malta, but still more Minorca, which he considered of infinitely more value than Malta, to Trinidada; but the opinions to which he had referred were sufficient to prove, that until the present moment no eminent man had attached that degree of importance to the possession of Malta, which it seemed to be now so much the fashion to attribute to it.

With regard to Egypt, Mr. Fox could not be persuaded that it was by any means the key to our East Indian territories; he could not help thinking, that from national sentiments of a most laudable kind, a degree of consequence had been attached to Egypt, which it did not in reality possess. The invasion of Egypt he had always considered as the most romantic and idle undertaking that ever was entered upon by France. Whether it was wise in us to undertake the recovery of it was another question. Great stress, however, had always been laid upon that expedition. The possession of Egypt had been the cause of continuing the war; its conquest from France had been the means of facilitating the peace. Egypt, likewise, was the theatre on which British valour became the most triumphant and British glory had been most signalized both by land and sea. The memory of our exploits in Egypt had impressed the minds of men in general with ideas of romance—with a sort of superstition which had given to that country an importance which had never before been discovered to belong to it; but surely it would not be gravely contended, that, because a British army had gained a splendid victory over the veteran troops of France, we ought ever after to insist on the possession of the spot on which that victory was obtained, in order to secure it from all harm, and protect it against any future invasion. What would have been thought of us if we had insisted on the plain of Blenheim after the battle, if we had regarded it as consecrated ground, never to be abandoned after that glorious event—an event not to be less highly valued than the achievements of a Nelson at Aboukir, or of an Abercrombie and a Hutchinson in Egypt? What seas should we ever quit or what territories should we ever surrender, if we were to retain all that had ever witnessed the triumphs of the British name?

"With regard to the East Indies," said Mr. Fox, "I conceive it to be a very

* Mr. Hastings's Trial before the House of Lords.

Digitized by Google

exaggerated statement of their value to call our possessions there the vital strength of the British empire. Surely the learned gentleman (Mr. Dallas) will not venture to describe our dominion in the East, or the fame which has attended our acquisition of it, in quite such enthusiastic language as that in which he has dwelt upon the classic glories of Egypt. That part of the world, undoubtedly, has contributed most of any to the vast increase of our dominion: it has not contributed in an equal degree to the honour of the British name;—it is not there that our character stands the most unblemished. And here I cannot help considering, while we are calling other nations to account, while we are crying out against the aggrandizement of France since the signature of the treaty of Amiens, whether others might not ask, which of the two nations has aggrandized itself the most, France in Europe, or Great Britain in India? Have you not added vast territories to your empire in India, just as France has done to hers in Europe, some by the effect of war, and some by direct annexation? I rather think, if you go back a little, and look at certain transactions, few countries would suffer more in character on the score of aggrandizement than Great Britain. We lay stress on aggrandizement, in Europe, and they may do so on aggrandizement in India; nor, do I know what defence we can set up against the accusation, unless we adopt a humourous one, which is said to have been made by a lady, who, on her return to Europe after a long residence in that part of the world, was charged with some irregularities of conduct, and who, having been questioned as to several specific instances, exclaimed, "No, never! never, upon my honour, on this side of the Cape of Good Hope?" But on the subject of Egypt—I wish to know whether I am to understand what has been advanced as an hyperbole of eloquence, or a grave determination. Are we to go to war the instant the French only think of Egypt. Is this the first time they have thought of it: Did not M. de Vergennes in 1786 entertain such a plan, and employ an agent to go to Egypt for a purpose similar to that which appears in the report of Sebastiani? The right hon. gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Pitt) was then minister. How did he act? Did he make war on France? Did he remonstrate? Did he ever offer a representation upon the subject? No, Sir; he entered into no dispute with M. de Vergennes, but he entered into a treaty of commerce with him."

Mr. Fox then entered more at large into the discussion of the article concerning Malta, which formed, as he contended, the substance of our whole immediate dispute with France. It was clear and indisputable that we had bound ourselves to give up the possession of Malta when it should be in a certain state. The 10th article of the treaty was said to have been entirely and solely drawn up by the ministers of this country. That article he desired to be read. [It was read accordingly.] By this it appears, that ministers bound themselves to surrender the island to the order of St. John, within a given period, when the three contingencies following should have happened: 1. When a grand master should have been appointed; 2. When a garrison of Neapolitans should have arrived to take possession of the place; and, 3. When certain powers should have been invited to guarantee its independence. These conditions have been fulfilled. The grand master has been chosen; the Neapolitans have arrived; and Russia, Prussia, Spain, and Austria, have been invited according to the stipulation to become the guarantees. Ministers knew very well,—they could not pretend to assert the contrary,—that the completion of this last stipulation was not deemed essential to the two former, or a *sine quâ non* of the evacuation of the island. It is stated, however, that there were other important articles to be executed before ministers could be peremptorily called on to fulfil this part of the treaty. Certain revenues were to be appropriated to the maintenance of the order; and these revenues having been confiscated, and the priories abolished in Spain and Bavaria, ministers gave us to understand that these acts were done by the contrivance of the French government, in order the more easily to obtain repossession of the island; consequently, that we ought to continue the occupation of it ourselves. The reasoning of ministers on this point he was at a loss to comprehend. According to their argument, France, it seems, always wished to throw difficulties in the way of our executing that part of the treaty. What! to throw difficulties in the way of our giving up Malta? No—but difficulties in the way of our being enabled to do

Digitized by Google

so with safety to ourselves, which amounted to the same thing. This would be a singular policy enough, considering the earnest representations made to us to evacuate the place, and the eagerness alleged to be shown by the first consul to get into it. But, of what nature were those difficulties? Certain priories had been abolished. Of what advantage could their abolition be to France? What! was it from the knights of Spain that the first consul apprehended such an opposition to his schemes, that he determined upon reducing them to beggary, by sequestrating the funds appropriated to their support? Was it from the sturdy knights of Bavaria that he feared such a resolute resistance, if they should once get a footing in the island, that he should never after be able to prevail over the independence of the order? What, he would ask, could France expect to gain by such a proceeding? What other effect could it have, except that of giving us a pretence for delaying the execution of the treaty, on the ground of the inability of the order to maintain itself, and to garrison the island? But even this case is provided for: If the knights should not be strong enough to take charge of the place at the period fixed for its evacuation, the Neapolitan troops were to stay so much the longer. If 2,000 Neapolitans should not be found sufficient to hold it until the definitive arrangements, provision is made for the sending of more. The native Maltese shall have half the garrison, and if the order should not be strong enough to supply the other half, they may recruit for the remainder from the natives of those countries, and it is limited to those countries only, that shall continue to possess langues, while the general independence of the island is provided for under the guarantee of Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia, Spain, and Prussia. All these powers, except Russia, had formally undertaken the guarantee; the only remaining difficulty, therefore, was, to procure her accession to it. Ministers seemed to be very angry that the French were not so much in earnest as themselves for Russia to become a guarantee of the arrangement. It would have been better, to be sure, if they had been equally so; it surely was natural, however, considering all things, that we should testify rather more anxiety than the French for the object in question. A requisition had been made by us, in which France afterwards joined, to the emperor of Russia to become a party to this article of the treaty, and we received in answer a proposal from Russia, accompanied by a note, which Mr. Fox was astonished had not been laid on the table of the House. In the note with which this proposal was accompanied, a most extraordinary circumstance first comes to light. It appears that the emperor of Russia had previously made known to us, that he could not consent to become a guarantee, unless that part of the article, which provided for the establishment of a Maltese langue, should be abrogated. It appears too, that at the very time we were pretending so much earnestness about this guarantee, and soliciting the emperor to accede to it, we knew it could not be complied with; we knew why it could not be complied with; we knew that a compliance with it would be "inconsistent with what had been agreed upon anterior to the treaty of Amiens between his imperial majesty and ourselves, with respect to the order of Malta, and the independence and neutrality of the island." It appears, nevertheless, that for the sake of obliging respectively Great Britain and France, and this not for Russian purposes, but for the most laudable of all purposes, namely, the preservation of the peace of Europe, his imperial majesty, is ready to become a guarantee on any other condition whatever which could be thought of as necessary, or best calculated to secure the independence of the island. This proposal is refused. Why? of what possible consequence is it to us whether a Maltese langue should exist or not? And what other steps do the ministers take to provide for the re-establishment of the order? They immediately propose to France that she should consent to our keeping Malta for ten years! Here, therefore, is the tenderness of ministers for the rights of the order of Malta! Let us but have the place for ten years, and the knights may go back to Rome if they please, and shift for themselves as they can! Ministers require what they call additional security and indemnity, and thus the British faith is violated, and a solemn treaty remains unfulfilled. As to any compensation, or any security to the Maltese themselves, against either France or England, there could have been no difficulty in procuring it, when so important an object as that of preserving the British character clear and unblemished, and of carrying into effect the spirit of the article of the treaty, was in view.

After all these difficulties, however,

Digitized by Google

respecting the langues and the sale of the priories, and so forth, had been got over; —after the question of the guarantee itself had been so settled as to induce government to take measures towards evacuating the island according to the treaty, appears the report of Sebastiani, and instantly the whole system of ministers is changed! That report contained the proof that an accredited military agent had been sent by the first consul to take a survey of the different parts of the Turkish empire, particularly Egypt, and also perhaps to hold out to the people of that country some ideas of a future connexion with France. That the mission of Sebastiani made a disclosure of the wishes and ulterior views of the first consul, Mr. Fox was ready to acknowledge; but was it any new discovery? Buonaparté had a desire (and here he adverted to the distinction drawn by Mr. T. Grenville, between a desire and a design), of recovering Egypt. It is said that, having that desire, the moment he sent a military person thither, he gave a proof of his design to attempt the re-conquest of it. This seemed to Mr. Fox an unwarrantable conclusion. What was published with regard to general Stewart, indeed, was grossly insolent; but the other part of it which regarded Egypt, was, in any view to its re-occupation, perfectly absurd. To find out that it was absurd was no great discovery, and required not the testimony afforded by the internal evidence of the paper itself; and as to the boasted refinements of French policy and prudence, surely they would have found out a better mode of insuring the success of an expedition to Egypt (if an expedition had been seriously their intention), than by publishing the letter which disclosed it. "If, however, the desire to obtain Egypt, such as it is proved by that letter, be a sufficient ground for war," said Mr. Fox, "again I repeat it, you never can be at peace, and you never could have been at peace, while the house of Bourbon was on the throne of France. Name the year since the peace of Utrecht in which you could have been at peace, if such a proceeding as this would have induced you to go to war? I am not now speaking of any of the revolutionary governments, or of the anarchy of France, but of the government of France under the regular rule of the house of Bourbon. Look at the several treaties of peace of 1749, of 1763, and of 1783. After the conclusion of peace on each of these occasions, one year did not elapse before France showed some signs of hostility to this country, against the true spirit of those treaties. And what is there of novelty in the present proceeding? I wish to know of those in any degree conversant with modern history, whether they have never heard of the military embassies of the French governments? Of the surveys taken by those to whom the embassies were entrusted, and of the means adopted by them to sound the dispositions of the people through whose countries they passed? I have, Sir, in support of my assertion, a remarkable and a powerful authority in the noble lord opposite (Hawkesbury). That noble lord told the House in his speech upon the peace, that scarcely a twelvemonth had elapsed after the conclusion of the treaty of 1783, before the restless spirit of the court of France began to show itself in India, and to manifest views, in that quarter of the world, inconsistent with the treaty just concluded, and incompatible with our safety. Am I, then, to understand that, if the noble lord had been secretary of state at those different periods, he would have advised his majesty to declare war against France? If I am, then I say we should not have had peace for any one whole year from 1749 to 1803."

Mr. Fox next proceeded to comment on that part of the conversation between lord Whitworth and the first consul, which avowed his general views relative to Egypt. The ministers had appeared greatly alarmed at their disclosure. He confessed that he could not see in that disclosure any fresh ground of apprehension, as it taught them nothing they might not have been fully aware of before; nothing, indeed, which they had not themselves proved that they were aware of before, by the very act of their stipulations on the subject of Malta. Some of the conversation had been misrepresented in a manner unworthy the importance of that debate. Whatever might be his opinion respecting other parts of the chief consul's conduct, on which he had not been backward in saying what he thought,—whatever he might think of many passages in that conversation, he would own that it appeared to him to carry with it a certain character of frankness which he could not find it in his mind to condemn. He tells us fairly, that, although he could have had Egypt, it was no object for him to have had it at the risk of a war; and war was not for his

Digitized by Google

interest. It was not for his interest to risk a war for Egypt, which one day or other, he tells us, would probably fall into his hands either by negotiation, or the dissolution of the Turkish empire. Now, was not this reasoning, the reasoning namely of interest, the common and ordinary motive which influenced every transaction between man and man? Were we, therefore, to deny it all credit here? "Were I to argue with the learned gentleman whose propositions I have denied," said Mr. Fox, "I should maintain, affirmatively, that Buonaparté had no intention of going to Egypt—not because he has declared he has none—but because he has with reason declared it not to be his interest to do so. He says, "I could have taken Egypt." Now, how is that expression represented? Is it to be fairly interpreted by saying, "I will endeavour to take Egypt?" "Could have taken it," is different even in the most obvious grammatical sense from "I will try to take it," or "I design to take it." The meaning in the present case is fixed by the very words of the conversation itself, which asserts the facility with which the first consul could have taken Egypt with the very troops he had sent to St. Domingo. It is the discovery of his designs, however, in the event of the dissolution of the Turkish empire, which determined the ministers to go to war with him immediately. Why? Is this singular in Buonaparté? Was the dissolution and partition of the Turkish empire an event never contemplated before? Does any body doubt that the empress of Russia had a "desire" for Egypt, and something more than a desire that her family should obtain the sovereignty of Constantinople? Nay, was not the circumstance of her christening her grandson by the name of Constantine, very generally attributed at the time to such views, and supposed to be done for the purpose of suiting the name to the intended station? But would it not have been thought monstrous that you should have gone to war with Russia on that account? But desire and design are the same thing—are they? Apply this to your own case. We had a desire, as it is manifest by Mr. Moore's mission, to interfere in the affairs of Switzerland. Did that desire ever ripen into a design? No, certainly: and the attempt was never made, nor even the design formed; for the best of reasons,—because it was found to be impracticable. It has been said, however, although no such design appears in the papers before us, that Buonaparté had proposed to some power of Europe to divide the Turkish empire. Now this of itself proves the distinction which we ought to keep constantly before our eyes, in considering the question of desire and design. To propose a project to another power is a proof of a desire, but when you abandon it on account of the impracticability of the execution, you cannot surely be then said to have any design. You may, indeed, still retain the desire, but the moment you find the execution impracticable, it would be madness to harbour the design, because rational design can never be entertained without some probability of success. But it is said that this design is sufficiently declared in the report of Sebastiani, for all the purposes of justifying the war. Now, what if Buonaparté had heard somewhere that you had a desire to occupy and to retain the Cape of Good Hope, and that you openly declared that as he was a man who kept no faith with others, no faith ought to be kept with him; what if he were to couple such a declaration with another, "that the minister ought to lose his head who gave up the Cape of Good Hope," and afterwards were to add to these presumptive evidences the fact of its being in your possession—I ask, whether Buonaparté might not call that the indication of a design on your part of retaining the Cape, with full as much justice as you infer from his declaration a design of occupying Egypt on his? But it is argued, that the mere act of sending Sebastiani is sufficient ground for war. Now this fact ministers must have known from general Stewart, by his dispatch of the 30th of November. The arrival of Sebastiani in Egypt, and his transactions there, were circumstances which general Stewart could not have failed communicating fully to our government. The publication of the report, also, is adduced as evidence of the intention, and it is asked, whether any man will publish what he does not intend to act? The value of Egypt, too, to Buonaparté is stated in addition. Now, if he really thought Egypt of that value, and if he wanted the key to it first, which is said to be Malta, for the surrender of which he was treating with us, can we suppose that he would have published his intention with regard to Egypt, as the means of prevailing on us to give him up Malta? No! the proposition is absurd

Digitized by Google

and ridiculous on the face of it; not would it be possible to account for such conduct at all; unless we at once believe Buonaparté to be a madman."

Mr. Fox next adverted to a part of the negotiation, which he professed to be, to him, utterly incomprehensible. "I am come to demand satisfaction," says lord Whitworth to the French minister. "What satisfaction?" asks M. Talleyrand.—"Why, really, as to that I cannot tell you, but I will send to England to inquire." Finding that they do not obtain satisfaction, for the best of all reasons, because they themselves do not know what to ask, the ministers change the point of satisfaction into one of security. "What security?" says the French minister. "Why that I can't tell," answers lord Whitworth, "but I will send to know." Well! it turns out that the security we want is the possession of Malta in perpetuity; next the possession of it for ten years, which, for all political purposes, amounts to a perpetuity; and then a number of other demands are thrown together, and the king of Sardinia, like the ghost in a tragedy, comes in at the last scene to unravel the plot, and bring about the catastrophe of the piece. He was dead and buried, it is true, long before the play began; no part was assigned him in the drama, but brought in at the stage-door towards the close of it, and coupled with Malta, ministers thought he would add greatly to the grandeur of the scene. At the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens, the king of Sardinia, together with many other princes, had been set aside, one by one. Ministers said that they had difficulties enough of their own, and that therefore they would have nothing to do with any of them. But when they came to insist on keeping Malta, and discovered that a war for Malta alone would not be very palatable to the people of England, they produced the king of Sardinia. They had a double purpose in this. The abrupt demand of Malta might have been revolting to the feelings of the first consul. By bringing forward, therefore, the king of Sardinia in the quarrel, and abandoning him afterwards in the negotiations, they would appear to soften their demand of Malta; while, on the other hand, they appeared to stand forward as protectors of a prince, in whose fate the emperor of Russia took a warm interest, and whom, if they gained nothing for him, they would at least leave in no worse condition than he was before. In addition to this, they required that Switzerland should be evacuated, and, as a condition, offered to acknowledge the king of Etruria, and the Cisalpine and the Ligurian republics. Now what could ministers seriously expect from such an offer? Did they really suppose that the first consul would care one straw whether the establishment he had made in Italy, should, or should not, be recognized by this country? Did they doubt that Buonaparté, in answer to their proposal, would beg of them to follow their own fancy on this point, and recognize or not as they might think convenient? "I am not sure," added Mr. Fox, "whether many persons who hear me are acquainted with the fact, but I believe it to be certain, that the United States of America, whose independence, under that name, was acknowledged by France in 1778, and what was much more important, by Great Britain in 1782, never was acknowledged by the empress of Russia to the day of her death; yet I never heard that America was the worse from the want of the recognition of her independence by that imperial princess. Nor did I ever hear that France, which had so large a share in the establishment of that independence, was disposed to quarrel with Russia for declining to acknowledge it. Nor, indeed, could any such refusal affect America. For what is recognition? nothing but mere matter of course, except as it may be connected with a claim. We gave up a great deal to America, when we acknowledged the independence of the United States. Why? because we had a claim to the sovereignty of them. The United States were not injured by the refusal of the empress of Russia to acknowledge them. Why? because Russia had no claim upon America. The recognition of the king of Etruria by the emperor, indeed, is very different. From him it is a boon, and a great one too; for by so doing, he abandons all his claims upon those territories. But we, in offering to acknowledge the king of Etruria, or the other changes in Italy, grant no boon to any of them. We have no claim on Tuscany—we have no claim on Milan—we have no claim on the Cisalpine or Ligurian republics: whether we acknowledge them or not, therefore, is matter of no importance to them, and is only a consideration of convenience to ourselves. The import-

Digitized by Google

ance to France of such a boon cannot, consequently, be contended for with any reason. What, then, is the result of all this? Why, that you suffered the opportunity to escape you, and, instead of interposing with a generous magnanimity for the protection of Holland; instead of looking to that country which stood in immediate need of being rescued from the most grievous oppression, in whose favour you might have roused all the indignant sympathies of Europe, and in whose cause you might have hoped for the co-operation, more or less, of the different great powers of the continent, you rest the whole quarrel with France on a point of sheer, naked, British interest, on your possession and occupation of Malta; a point in which no other European state can feel an interest, or entertain a wish in common with yourselves. You have reduced this whole question to such an issue, that, except possibly the Turks, the value of whose alliance is easily appreciated, no other power can be induced to come to your aid by the sense of a common interest. You have deprived yourselves of every advantage you would have had from the admiration and from the good will of mankind, and you have sent your cause into the world, stripped of every motive to union, derived either from their interests or their virtues.

But can peace yet be made? I think it may. It has been contended that the emperor of Russia still refuses to guarantee Malta. Is that quite so certain? But be the fact so, or not, are not the communications from that excellent prince of such a nature as to encourage the hope, that for the sake of preserving the peace of Europe, he is ready to interpose his mediation, in order to reconcile the present differences with France? Has he not actually offered that mediation? If you accept it, will it not appear to all Europe that you ask only for justice? And will not that be of more consequence to you than any other consideration? Justice, believe me, is a very powerful weapon for you, if you choose to use it, and if you accept the mediation of Russia, the justice of your object will be palpable to the world. But I ask you to do so for another purpose. I ask you whether it would not be better that Malta should be in the hands of the emperor of Russia, than ceded to Great Britain? Whether, with a view to the future peace of Europe, and of affording a fairer chance for its continuance, it would not be better that the emperor of Russia should be the occupier of Malta, as between Great Britain and France, than that it should be absolutely in the hands of Great Britain? I certainly should consider the guarantee, under the terms proposed by Russia, the best of all. Why? because it would secure the friendship of Russia; and because our having it even in full sovereignty cannot be put in competition with that friendship. In this war, in the course of any future war with France, which would you prefer, Malta, or the friendship of Russia? I can have no hesitation in answering—the friendship of Russia. And that you will secure it by accepting the proffered mediation, is a point on which I have no difficulty of belief; for if the accounts I have heard of him be true (although accounts of princes must be received, with many allowances), the emperor of Russia is a prince who places his glory in a true love of peace, who will naturally feel a still deeper interest in any peace which he might become the instrument of preserving, and whose wishes, therefore, must incline towards that party, the views of which should appear most congenial with his own. To obtain his good offices for the restoration of peace, is, in my opinion, of more real consequence to us, and to all Europe, than our possessing Malta under any circumstances. But is there not great probability of our being enabled, through these means, to preserve and consolidate the peace on a much broader basis than that of settling the present dispute concerning Malta? Suppose that illustrious prince were not only to guarantee Malta, but were to enter into guarantees upon a still more extensive principle—to guarantee Egypt to the Turks, for instance. Would not that be worth a thousand Maltas? I go still further. By what I have heard of the emperor of Russia, from a quarter on which I think I can rely, he is disposed also to look to the freedom of Switzerland and of Holland. I do firmly believe, that under his mediation and guarantee, undertaken upon a large scale, not only Switzerland and Holland, but perhaps even Spain, might recover their independence, and afford you thus an additional security for peace, or assistance in any renewal of the contest. On these large and liberal principles of policy, other powers might be brought to concur with

Digitized by Google

you; whereas, if you are seen to pursue nothing but your own sordid, separate interests, you will obtain no cordial assistance, and you will conclude no solid pacification.

The invariable demand of France upon us, observed Mr. Fox, to evacuate Malta, has been confined simply to its evacuation according to the terms and stipulations of the treaty. Had we felt ourselves and the rest of Europe in such a state of insecurity as we seem to apprehend from the great power and ambition of France, better would it have been by far to have abrogated the whole treaty at once, and to have declared that, as it was incapable of execution in one of its material articles, it was unfit for execution in any. But, if France had done so! France is said to have no feeling of honour. Let us put the case fairly to ourselves, and suppose, that by an article in the treaty France had bound herself to give us the Mauritius. In what terms should we not exclaim against France, if, alleging our detention of the Cape of Good Hope as a proof of our *malus animus* towards her, she had refused to surrender that possession? What should we think and say of such an excuse, grounded on such a proof of our hostile disposition? France, however, had not made the demand of Malta for herself: it was only to the leaving it in our hands that the first consul had uniformly refused his consent; he had raised no difficulties to its occupation by other powers; it had been directly offered to Russia. Even with regard to its evacuation by the British troops, he had fixed no precise time, had insisted on no immediate step towards its performance. This conduct certainly bore no appearance of imperiousness or arrogance. It is answered, however, that it was but an assumed moderation in the first consul, put on for the sake of his immediate intereats; and that his real design was war and aggression, whenever the moment should be more favourable. His merchant ships are now at sea; he waits their return into the French ports; and while his country is exposed to danger at so many different points, the present, it is argued, is not the precise moment at which he would begin a war with us; but for this he will choose his own time. Be it so. Supposing the advantage to be on the side of Great Britain now, would it not continue in nearly the same degree during the rest of this year, or the next year, or the year after? And what was the nature of this advantage as applicable to the question at issue? Should we not always retain it? Must not French commerce, during the continuance of our naval superiority, always remain to the same degree a pledge in our hands for the performance of the engagement which constituted the subject of the present dispute? That engagement was the independence of Malta. If Malta, indeed, were occupied by France, it might be right to make use of our immediate advantage, to oblige her to restore the island to its independence; but now what should we gain by threatening the first consul to block up his ports, to capture his ships, and ruin his commerce? Nothing but another promise; a promise that, during a certain time, he would not disturb us in the occupation of Malta. And, did the experience of mankind, did the evidence of history furnish a ground of reliance on promises of this sort? Did promises give any real security for the performance of stipulations? Granting the first consul to have entered into any engagement on this head that we might have required, if his ambition be of that nature which is ascribed to him, could we be simple enough to hope that he would really leave us in the unmolested possession of Malta, and that he would not insist on our evacuating it the very instant at which that opportunity should occur for which we now suppose him to be waiting? The futility of such promises, and the little scruple with which they were evaded, could be no better illustrated than by the conduct of Francis 1st, when a prisoner at Madrid, after the battle of Pavia. This monarch, it is well known, was obliged by Charles 5th, to subscribe, for the recovery of his liberty, to conditions of so harsh a nature, that it was foreseen great objections would be made to their ratification by the states of France. He was compelled, therefore, to engage to return to Madrid in the event of failure, and this engagement he conceived himself to have well and faithfully performed—by building and residing at a house in the Bois de Boulogne, which he called Madrid. On the other hand, while we were pursuing the light and frivolous advantages which a promise of this sort might hold forth to us, we lost the benefit of another, which, as far as it went, was much more valuable and solid. It cannot be denied, that he who makes a promise

Digitized by Google

puts himself to a certain degree in the power of the party to whom he makes it. The independence of Malta was provided for by the treaty. The engagements of France on this head are solemn and positive. If, then, upon our evacuation of the island in consequence of that treaty, the first consul of France were to attempt any thing against its independence, we should derive, in any quarrel we might have to sustain with him on that account, all the benefit (and a considerable one it would be) arising from the disadvantage in point of general character and estimation, to which our adversary would expose himself by such a breach of promise. But all advantages arising from this state of things, such as it might be, we have totally foregone, by resting the dispute with France upon its present grounds.

The charges of arrogance, and of a superiority assumed by the first consul in his language towards this country, are further urged and supported on the testimony of his conversations with lord Whitworth, to which allusions had been so frequently made: those conversations are said to have been not only offensive in their tone, but in their substance. Mr. Fox could see no foundation for this species of charge in the long conversation with lord Whitworth, on which so much stress had been laid, and some expressions of which had been so triumphantly quoted. What was the report of those expressions, as given by lord Whitworth himself? Does the first consul say haughtily to him, "I will come and crush you—*Je vous écraserai*?" Just the reverse. He tells us plainly and directly indeed, that he shall attempt to invade us; but he says also, that he knows the chances are a hundred to one against his success; that it is a hundred to one that he and the greatest part of the expedition would go to the bottom of the sea. He talked much, and with great earnestness, on this subject, but never once affected to diminish the danger. Yet this declaration of the first consul, of the almost utter hopelessness of any enterprise he might attempt against us, is quoted as a proof of his arrogance and presumption! "Whatever else there may be in it," said Mr. Fox, "there certainly is in this conversation no tone of superiority; on the contrary, it is an acknowledgment of superiority on our side. To call it arrogant or presumptuous, or to say that it is offensive in its tone, or in its substance, appears to be a very whimsical imputation. It reminds me of the most extravagant passage that is, I believe, to be found in a great, and, with me, most favourite poet, and who, notwithstanding the frequent instances of the same sort which occur in his works, is one of the finest in our language, I mean Dryden, who, in the most extravagant, perhaps, of his pieces, and into the mouth of Almanzor, puts a sentiment which has always appeared to me to outsoar every flight allowable to the wildest fictions of the imagination. In the Conquest of Grenada, his hero, who is burlesqued in the Rehearsal, under the character of Drawcansir, says, in anger to his rival—

"Thou shalt not wish her thine: thou shalt not dare
"To be so impudent as to despair!"

Now, I confess, notwithstanding what I may have thought of the extravagance of my favourite poet, that I had over-rated it. I had thought that no case could happen to give common sense to those expressions, and make them applicable to real life. I thought them the daring efforts of a vivid genius, aiming at the summit of poetical hyperbole; but now I find that Dryden gave only a tame, prosaic account of a matter of fact, a few years before it happened! He says, "You shall not wish, you shall not dare, to be so impudent as to despair!" Buonaparté says, he despairs of success in his invasion of England, and for his pride and impudence in despairing as well as for his presumption in telling them so, ministers think no punishment too great. Now I profess myself to be one of those who agree in this respect with the first consul, and who think that in this despair there is infinitely more good sense than arrogance. I think it is full a hundred to one that he and the greater part of his expedition would go to the bottom of the sea, if he should attempt a descent on our coast. I certainly think this, and I am very glad to find that Buonaparté is of the same opinion.

Having closed the argument under these different heads, Mr. Fox proceeded to the summing up of his opinions on the whole of the question before the House. He said, that after the ministers had suffered the continent to be reduced to its present state, after they had submitted, without remonstrance, to every encroachment of French ambition, after they had left Holland and Switzerland to their fate, and all the smaller states of Europe under

Digitized by Google

the dominion or the influence of France, he could not think the war they were now undertaking for Malta, plain Malta, either wise or justifiable. What, however, it might be asked of him, would he himself propose under the present circumstances? It was his opinion, that peace was not even then desperate, if proper means were resorted to — means which presented themselves at that very moment, and which were in every way consistent with strict honour, and with a large and liberal policy. He recommended to his majesty's ministers without delay, to avail themselves of the opportunity which then offered, and to co-operate with the wishes which he understood to have been expressed by the emperor of Russia, for the preservation of the peace of Europe. He recommended, and again enforced, the acceptance of the Russian mediation, not for the sake of procuring the guarantee of that power for Malta merely, but with a view of extending it upon a grand, comprehensive scheme of policy, and in concert with other great powers, to the protection of the weaker and more defenceless states, and thus ensuring, as far as stability could be expected in human affairs, the solid and permanent pacification of Europe. What, he asked, was the other side of the alternative?—War! And what would be the probable effect of resorting to it? He had already touched on the conduct of the first consul, and some of the reasons which had been assigned for it. He had touched also on the state of the inhabitants of other countries, none of whom, he feared, would be improved in their condition by war; but he must now come to that body of people whom he had often declared to be more emphatically his clients—the people of England. He would, for the moment, put out of his consideration all questions of danger to ourselves. He would suppose Buonaparté to feel the truth of what he himself had declared, namely, that he despaired of success in attempting a descent—he would suppose that all parts of our empire were at present secure, and that even in a protracted war, there would be no probability, no possibility (if gentlemen would take it so) of affecting us in any quarter by invasion. Even in this state of security, however, what was our situation? Had we forgotten the two last years of the last war? Had we forgotten the state and condition of the middle classes of society in this island; of every country gentleman of a limited income, of every tradesman, indeed of every man in it who did not possess a very large fortune; had we already forgotten how the late war had pressed upon them? Let us recollect these things; let us recollect the circumstances which occurred in the course of that war; what we all suffered by the immense loads that were laid upon us to support it—their grievous and most intolerable weight, and the cruel and grinding measures of every description, under which this country had groaned during so many years. Could ministers, with these recollections in their minds, bring themselves again to precipitate their country into miseries, so horrible in their nature, and so easily to be avoided? What had we now to expect? He had heard, indeed, some talk of an economical war. But even this economy (difficult as the word was at all times to understand when so applied) was now explained to consist in the adoption of measures leading to an immense and immediate enlargement of our expenses. We were told that we must make great exertions? And what exertions? Exertions beyond any thing we have ever yet known; far beyond what were found necessary during the glorious war of queen Anne; far beyond those by which we obtained that preeminence which has immortalized the memory of the late earl of Chatham; far beyond even those of the late war itself. And by whom were we told all this? If by some gentlemen who had no experience in politics, and under whose guidance we had not already suffered; if by some orator, as a mere figure of speech without a meaning, and by way of a flourish in debate, for such a purpose it might do well; but we are told this, not by a novice in the art of extortion, but by an artist! "If a man without experience or reputation," said Mr. Fox, "examines my case when I am ill, and tells me, 'You must 'have a limb cut off to save your life,' I might still hope for a cure, without having recourse to so dreadful a remedy; but, if the skilful practitioner, the regular doctor himself tells me so, after consultation, if the experienced operator, under whose prescriptions and directions I have already suffered, tells me so, I know what I must endure! If he tells me, "I must pull out all your teeth; I must cut off part of the extremities, or you will die," I have only to prepare for the operation. I know the alternative is death or torture. This

Digitized by Google

great artist, this eminent doctor (Mr. Pitt), has told us that, much as we had already been distinguished for exertion, what we have hitherto done is nothing. We have hitherto been only fighting for morality and religion, for the law of nations, for the rights of civil society, and in the cause of God. Resources fully adequate to such minor objects, the right hon. gentleman assures us, we have already employed; but now we have a contest to sustain of a higher order—a contest which would compel us to strain every remaining nerve, and to call for sacrifices new and extraordinary, such as had never before been heard of in this country. We are told, that within a month, within a fortnight perhaps, a plan must be formed for raising many millions of money, in a mode different from any that has hitherto been attempted. It was not to be a pitiful expedient for a single year; it was not to be an expedient similar to those adopted by lord North during the American war, or by the right hon. gentleman himself for nearly the whole of the last war; but it was to be a plan which would last for ever, or at least until two or three hundred millions should be raised by it. Severe measures for general defence are also announced to us as necessary within a fortnight; plans of which no man can as yet form a conception, but which ministers are to reveal to us in due time, and when they shall have reached their full maturity of wisdom.

The income-tax was felt heavily by most of the members of this House, although many of them are in the superior ranks of fortune—heavily, indeed, by all descriptions of persons in the country, except the most opulent, or those in the lowest class of labourers, who were too poor to be made the objects of it. I believe there are now near the projectors of that tax, many persons who felt the gripe of it most keenly, although some of them were so situated that it was not prudent for them to complain. That tax did, indeed, affect every person of any condition in this country, but affected them very differently. The possessors of their thirty, their twenty, their ten, and even their one thousand a year, felt it as nothing, when compared to the possessors of only their two, their three, their four, or their five hundred. Ask that numerous and intelligent class of persons how they felt the income-tax? I am speaking of the poor old income-tax, not the tax now about to be imposed—I speak of that mild and gentle operation, which seized only upon one-tenth of a man's income, and not of a measure which may exact a fifth, and possibly a half; a measure, too, which must be improved in the mode of its execution, since the greater the sum to be raised by it, the more rigorous must be the inquisition. Let no man now look to his holding a pound without giving possibly fifteen shillings of it to government towards the support of the war; let no man be too confident that an inquisitor may not be empowered to break open his desk, in order to search for the other five. And all this for what? For Malta! Malta! plain, bare, naked Malta, unconnected with any other interest! What point of honour can the retention of Malta be to you? Something of that nature may be felt by France, but to you, I aver it is, as a point of honour, nothing. "But it may be prudent to keep it." Is the keeping it worth a contest? Does the noble lord think it so? On the contrary, is he not of opinion that it is not? "Oh! but we are to oppose the aggrandizement of France, the ambition of Buonaparté, which will destroy us like a liquid fire." We have, indeed, heard some splendid philippics on this subject; philippics which Demosthenes himself, were he among us, would hear with pleasure, and possibly with envy; philippics which would lead us directly to battle, without regard to what may follow; but then comes the question—What shall we have to pay for them? What is the amount of the bill? I remember an old French proverb, and I am not afraid of being deemed too much of a Frenchman if I should quote it: the proverb seems almost an answer to one in English, which says that "things are good because they are dear." The author of the French one, however, tells us that, let things be ever so good, yet if they are dear, he has no pleasure in eating them, "le cout en ôte le gout." Now so it is with me, when I hear the harangues of the right hon. gentleman in favour of war, I think the articles drest up are exquisite, but that the cost spoils the relish. However, these philippics are not new to us. I remember when lord Rosslyn (then Mr. Wedderburn), made a vehement and eloquent philippic before the privy council against Dr. Franklin, calling him "a hoary headed traitor," and so forth. I remember the prodigious effect produced by this

Digitized by Google

splendid invective: so great was it, that when the privy council went away, they were almost ready to throw up their hats for joy, as if they had obtained a triumph. Why, Sir, we paid a pretty dear price for that triumph afterwards! In the beginning of the last war, we had abilities, which we now enjoy no longer, and which no one remembers with more regret than I do. There was no want of imagery, no want of figures of rhetoric, no want of the flowers of eloquence;—eloquence seldom equalled, and never surpassed by man, and all exerted to support the war. We know how that war ended, and the damp which was cast upon our ardour at the sight of the bill when it came to be paid. So now, when I hear all these fine and eloquent philippics, I cannot help recollecting what fruits such speeches have generally produced, and dreading the devastation and carnage which usually attend them. The right hon. gentleman, when he appears before us in all the gorgeous attire of his eloquence, reminds me of a story which is told of a barbarous prince of Morocco, a Muley Molock, or a Muley Ishmael, who never put on his gayest garments, or appeared in extraordinary pomp, but as a prelude to the murder of many of his subjects. Now, when I behold splendor much more bright, when I perceive the labours of an elegant and accomplished mind—when I listen to words so choice, and contemplate all the charms of his polished elocution,—it is well enough for me, sitting in this House, to enjoy the scene, but it gives me most gloomy tidings to convey to my constituents in the lobby. For these reasons, Sir, I should wish, previously to our entering into this war, to be told what event it is that will put an end to it. I would ask what are we to gain by this contest? I know I may be told, that it is an old and a foolish question. That it is old I know, but that it is foolish I do not. Switzerland and Holland are, in my opinion, the two great objects to be kept in view, as countries the liberation of which from the yoke of France would be most desirable. But have you any hopes of accomplishing such an object? Have you any chance of doing so by the course you are now about to take? No man thinks more highly than I do, of the ability and gallantry of your commanders; no man thinks more highly than I do, of the intrepidity and valour of your soldiers; no man thinks more highly than I do of the immense power, most incomparable skill and invincible spirit of your navy; no man has more earnest wishes than I have to see the power of France reduced by the efforts of Great Britain. Much certainly, in one way, may be done towards this object. You may seize her islands—you may take her colonies and destroy her trade; you have done it before, and, for aught I know, you may distress her even more. Even then, what will you ultimately gain? On the other hand, what may you not ultimately lose? You may be driven to the brink of bankruptcy yourselves. But France, we are told, will have been destroyed first. France, may, indeed, be made a beggar, but will that make her a better neighbour to you? Say even that a new revolution should happen to France, as many have happened to her within these ten years—What will you be the better for that? "France," you may then exclaim, "is now more miserable than ever she was!" To be sure she will be so; and you—how will you be the better for her misery? It is argued, however, that if we are to go to war, it is wiser to commence it now, than to delay it; distinctions are drawn between internal strength and strength for the annoyance of an enemy; it it said that, as to France, another year may extend her commerce, increase her population, and thus give her additional means of annoying us; and that all these means will be diminished by the revolutions she may suffer in another war. If she should suffer in the next war ten revolutions, instead of the five or six through which she struggled in the last, putting all other considerations out of the question, are we justified by experience in expecting that her sufferings will render her a better neighbour to us, or less troublesome to the repose of the world? Was she so wasted by the losses of the late war, was she so enervated by the calamities of her revolutions, as to be rendered incapable of annoying others, or of defending herself? Were not her latest efforts, on the contrary, the most terrible and the most successful?"

From these grounds, which Mr. Fox recapitulated, he drew the conclusion, that we were in a situation, in which, if we were to proceed on our present narrow ground of mere local British interest, we had nothing to gain; absolutely nothing. We could not hope for an ally from any quarter of the world. But if the House

Digitized by Google

should agree to the amendment moved on the address, it would open to us another and a better course. The amendment contained nothing, which, with the exception of a very few words indeed, they did not all believe to be true. That his majesty's ministers had not done the best that could have been done, in the whole of the negotiation, was certainly a very general opinion. That question was by common consent (as it appeared) to be the subject of debate at a future day; the address he thought would prejudge that question; whereas the amendment kept it entirely open for discussion and decision. To attain the greater objects of the amendment, Mr. Fox gave notice, that he should, at no very distant period, move the House to address his majesty to avail himself of the disposition manifested by the emperor of Russia to bring about a general peace. If that prince should either be unwilling to engage in the mediation, or unable, through the fault of our enemy, to accomplish its purpose, neither of which Mr. Fox could believe, the House would enjoy the satisfaction of reflecting that they had done every thing in their power, which prudence could dictate, to avoid the calamities of war. The alternative would then be inevitable, and they would adopt it without reproach. At present nothing could be said in favour of the policy of war, but that it may be better for us now than it would be four months hence. This advantage would be more than counterbalanced by proving to all Europe, that war was not our choice; that we had applied to one of its first powers to prevent it, and that we were ready to accept the proffered mediation. Mr. Fox concluded his speech with stating the strong sense of duty, and the deep anxiety of mind under which he had been impelled to deliver his opinions so much at length; and with exhorting the House, before they entered on this great contest, not only to pause, to deliberate, and to satisfy themselves, but to do every thing that depended on them to convince their constituents and all Europe that the avoiding it was impossible.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said, he had never heard with more admiration the talents of the hon. gentleman, nor had more occasion to lament that the powers of his great mind should have been employed for the purpose to which they were then applied; to give encouragement where encouragement ought not to be given, namely, to our enemies; not that it could be so intended, although it was likely to have such an effect. He would put it to the candour of that hon. gentleman whether he thought it fair to make such an appeal to the feelings of mankind, for the purpose of enlisting them, as it were, to fight against their public duty? Having been one of those who advised his majesty to send to parliament the message on which the address was moved, he was satisfied to rest with the House, the consideration of his motives, and those of his colleagues, and he hoped the House were satisfied that no reluctance had ever been shewn on his part to enter into that discussion. He hoped it would be the opinion of the House, that his majesty's ministers had been sincere in their endeavours to preserve peace. He then proceeded to take notice of what had been stated by Mr. Fox, by way of comment on the various other topics stated in his majesty's declaration: upon all which topics the hon. gentleman seemed to insist that ministers had not performed their duty inasmuch as they had omitted to make specific remonstrances to France in each of these cases as they occurred. Upon this subject, however, the hon. gentleman had not done justice to ministers; for representations had been made upon almost every one of these topics. With regard to Switzerland, their object was, to maintain its independence, and they expressed that object by Mr. Moore, and intended to support the Swiss, until it became impracticable by their being overwhelmed. However, the interference of this country had not been totally useless; for our exertions had been the means of preventing the first consul from declaring himself their first magistrate. More would have been endeavoured by ministers in that case, but there was no corresponding disposition in the other great powers of Europe to make a common cause with the people of Switzerland. The course which he should take would be to shew, that the animus of the government of France was manifestly to injure and insult this country, and it was under this conviction, that the question of peace or war was properly to be decided. An imputation had been cast on ministers, as if they had neglected to demand satisfaction upon points as they occurred; but he trusted it would appear to the House, that satisfaction had been demanded on each particular case which required it. He referred to the report of

Digitized by Google

Sebastiani; and contended, that it was the determination of the French government to interfere with respect to Egypt, and to conduct itself contrary to the express provisions of the treaty of Amiens, which provided for the integrity of the Turkish empire. He referred to various parts of the correspondence, as well as to the conference between lord Whitworth and the chief consul himself, and also to what related to Malta; and maintained, that ministers had omitted no part of their duty. The French government availed itself of every opportunity, to show its hostile temper, and to manifest a determination of rendering war inevitable. They had made preparations for that purpose, by an augmentation of their forces. The war could not be avoided, because it was already begun; but if the emperor of Russia, or any other considerable power, should make any proposition of a practical nature, by which peace might be restored he should feel great satisfaction in being the instrument of laying it before his majesty; but he saw nothing in the disposition of the French government which warranted such an expectation. We ought therefore to prepare for an arduous contest. We must provide effectually for our domestic security. Many persons, he was aware, must suffer great deprivations, for the purpose of having the country secured against the danger with which it was menaced. He wished to impress upon the House, that the present war was founded on unavoidable necessity, and that there was in his majesty's ministers a sincere disposition to terminate it, whenever it could be terminated with honour. He would therefore indulge a hope, that the hon. gentleman who moved the amendment, would sacrifice private opinion, in this case, to the advantages of unanimity. The difference between the sentiments contained in the address and those in the amendment was literally nothing.

The *Attorney General* said, that the arguments of Mr. Fox were calculated to do much mischief, as they were ingenious. The hon. gentleman had laid down principles, which would furnish Buonaparté with arguments for the justification of his conduct. He had observed that the war was unnecessary; but if ever a war was commenced on an honourable principle, it was the present.

Mr. *Windham* said, that the arguments offered by Mr. Fox appeared to him fallacious. The question before the House was of considerable moment; but his mind was diverted from the subjects on which he had intended to address the House by the strange language which he had lately heard. He could now only point out the mischief of this speech, and he must say its wickedness. The topics touched upon by the hon. gentleman were the very poisoned arrows of debate, which, by general consent, were proscribed. They might be used on any occasion, and were quite unconnected with the point at issue. That war produces much public inconvenience and private misery, might be urged against all wars, however just or unavoidable. The question was not, whether the income tax was a bad thing; but whether it was not a better thing than an income tax imposed by a French prefect? The hon. gentleman had shown himself the pander to all the base and illiberal passions of the people, by thus supporting selfishness against patriotism, and opposing private considerations to the grand view of national policy. If he stooped so low, he was not to be envied in the triumph of his eloquence, or the number of his admirers. It was lamentable, however, to see the contrast between the hon. gentleman and the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt) whose return to the House was so warmly welcomed. That right hon. gentleman had not displayed his great talents in damping the zeal and depressing the spirit of the people, by an appeal to the sordid passions of our nature; but in kindling the flame of patriotism, and calling forth the energies of the country, to meet with firmness the difficulties which surrounded it. The conduct of Mr. Fox resembled that of a surgeon who should dissuade his patient from submitting to a necessary operation by talking of the pain that he would suffer from it, while this was the only thing that could stop the progress of a mortal distemper.

Mr. *W. Smith* condemned the severe epithets which had been applied, by Mr. Windham, to the speech of Mr. Fox. He thought when the heat of the moment had subsided, he must feel remorse, for the expressions he had used.

Mr. *Windham*, in explanation, allowed that he did not wish the words that had fallen from him, in the heat of debate, to be understood in the strict literal meaning.

Mr. *Fox* said, he excused the warmth of the right hon. gentleman; and, as for himself, he had a foible, of not easily

Digitized by Google

and slightly quarrelling with an old acquaintance.

The question being put, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question, the House divided:

Tellers.

YEAS	Mr. Attorney General ... Mr. Bond	398
NOES	Mr. Whitbread..... Mr. W. Smith	67

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

List of the Minority.

Adair, R.	Johnstone, George
Anson, Thomas	Kinnaird, C.
Aubrey, sir J.	Lambton, R. J.
Andover, lord	Madocks, W. A.
Antonie, W. Lee	Milford, L.
Barclay, G.	Milbanke, sir R.
Bankes, H.	Milner, sir W.
Bouverie, hon. E.	Milnes, James
Burdett, sir F.	Moore, G. P.
Buller, Mr.	Moore, Peter
Bennet, capt.	North, Dudley
Bent, R.	Northey, W.
Cavendish, lord G. Hk	Peirse, Henry
Caulfield, H.	Plumer, W.
Coke, T. W.	Petty, lord H.
Coke, E.	Ponsonby, hon. W.
Courtenay, J.	Pytches, John
Creevey, T.	Russell, lord W.
Combe, H. C.	Raine, Jonathan
Daly, Bowes	Richardson, J.
Douglas, marq. of	St. John, hon. St. A.
Dundas, hon. L.	Stanley, lord
Dundas, hon. C.	Spencer, lord R.
Dundas, hon. G.	Somerville, sir M.
Fellowes, R.	Thownsend, lord J.
Fitzpatrick. gen.	Thornton, Henry
Fox, hon. C. J.	Walpole, hon. G.
Grey, C.	Western, C. C.
Hamilton, H.	Wilberforce, W.
Harrison, J.	Winnington, sir. E.
Howard, H.	Wharton, J.
Heathcote, John	TELLERS.
Hussey, Wm.	Whitbread, Samuel
Jekyll, Joseph	Smith, W.
Jervoise, C. J.	

May 25. The Address was reported; and, on the question that it be read a second time,

Sir *R. Peel* said, he had a decided objection to war in any shape; but with respect to this war, it did appear from the papers, that it was unavoidable. It did not appear to be so much the desire of the French government to obtain the rock of Malta; the rock of the English constitution was what they really aimed at. It was our liberty, protected by our constitution, that gave them the most uneasiness; a constitution which reflected so strong a light to the people of France, that it gave them a perfect insight into the rotten state of their own society. He could not conceive that the French people, who had so long been struggling for liberty, and who now ought to set some value on freedom, would long continue under tyranny.

Mr. *H. Lascelles* said, that this war was brought upon us by no act of our own, and therefore he would support such measures as might lay burthens on his constituents. The conduct of France, ever since the peace was concluded, had been atrocious. Every means had been employed by us to avert the calamities of war. France had put it to us, whether we would sacrifice every thing to support ourselves in an insecure peace. He could not see, from the papers any disposition, on the part of France, to improve the friendship between the two countries. He did not pretend to define with accuracy when a nation should go to war, but he knew there was a point beyond which we should not allow another nation to go.

Sir *W. Pulteney* was fully convinced that ministers had not adopted the alternative of war so long as there remained any chance of securing the blessings of peace. The great object of the French, in the possession of Malta, was to cripple our commerce, and reduce our navy. Would any man contend for the propriety of our surrendering so important a situation, seeing the unequivocal designs of France upon Egypt, as a road to the subjugation of our Indian possessions? He hoped that ministers would be supported in the conduct of a war which they had used every honourable exertion to avoid.

Mr. *Bankes* said, his principal objection to the address was, that he could not approve those words which gave to ministers full credit for earnestly having endeavoured, by every means in their power, to avoid the war; for it appeared to him from the papers on the table, that they were not anxious to preserve the peace, but that they, on the contrary, wished to renew the war.

Mr. *Hobhouse* said, he was prepared to support every tittle of the address, and still further the cause of ministers. They had laid down to themselves a line of moderation and firmness which they had uniformly maintained: they had vindicated the honour of this country in resisting a systematic attempt to destroy the liberties and the morals of Europe: they had steered the middle line; neither abjectly

Digitized by Google

submitting to the foe, nor sedulously seeking pretences for war; and their conduct entitled them to the thanks of the whole country.

Mr. *Shaw Lefevre* gloried in supporting the Address, as it afforded him an opportunity of expressing his indignation at the overbearing conduct of France. The case was fully and fairly before the country. It would now judge for itself, and when once satisfied, that its cause was good, no doubt could be entertained of its readiness to stake every thing for the preservation of its rights and its existence. He had wished for entire unanimity; because the times required that good old practice, a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether—but complete unanimity was denied. He was convinced, that war was the only safe road to peace, and under the positive assurances of ministers, that they were still ready to receive overtures for negotiation, such was his confidence in their moderation, that he was persuaded they would not refuse such terms, as were consistent with our safety, honour, and happiness.

Mr. *Wilberforce* deprecated war, if it could be averted by the amicable mediation of Russia, which he still thought practicable.

The Address was agreed to.

Debate in the Lords on the King's Message relative to the Discussions with France.] May 23. The order of the day for taking his majesty's Message into consideration being read,

Lord *Pelham* rose to move an Address. From the papers on the table, he was confident their lordships must see that ministers had no wish to conceal any part of their conduct. He would not contend, that their conduct might not, on a future occasion, be made the subject of inquiry; but he must express a hope, that the discussion on the present occasion would be conducted with as little reference as possible to the conduct and merits of ministers. The great, and, indeed, the only question was, whether legitimate ground of war had been established. After having maturely considered the papers, he had no difficulty in declaring the grounds of war contained therein, to be most strong, clear, and distinct. The conclusion left on the minds of all unprejudiced men must be, that war was rendered inevitable. He then adverted briefly to the principal points of dispute between the two governments. With respect to Malta, the conduct pursued on the part of this country proved the sincerest desire of peace. A very short period had elapsed before (with the view of faciliating the evacuation of the island) an accredited officer was appointed to arrange the mode in which it was to take place. Sir A. Ball received instructions to concert with an agent on the part of the French government the means of executing the article of the treaty with the least possible difficulty. Previous to the evacuation, the election of a grand master was an object of important consideration, and to this his majesty had given every possible facility. The grand master then chosen had seen reasons for not acceding to the election, and a new election became indispensable. Again, his majesty, actuated by the same desire of peace, acceded to an arrangement for a subsequent election, with the view of removing every obstacle to the evacuation of the island. A body of Neapolitan troops were in the first instance to be admitted into the island; and to their admission, on the part of his majesty, not the smallest obstacle was opposed. It was about the 27th of January that the French government began to press the evacuation of Malta; and that demanded some satisfactory explanation of the pretensions advanced, and the ministers views disclosed. Circumstances then existed, which rendered it necessary to refer back to what had been the conduct of the first consul from the period when the treaty was concluded. In the course of this review, the irresistible inference was, that the conduct of the French government had been one constant series of acts totally inconsistent with a sincere desire of preserving peace. At an early period after the treaty was signed, representations were made about the freedom of the press in this country, and the necessity of subjecting not only it, but the deliberative assemblies of the country; to a degree of restraint inconsistent with the genius of our constitution. The stay of the princes of the house of Bourbon, of certain bishops particularly named, and a number of emigrants who continued to wear the badges of extinguished royalty, were made the subjects of complaint. What the answer of ministers to these complaints was, was explained in the papers; and he entertained a confident expectation, that it was of a nature to meet with universal approbation. With regard

Digitized by Google

to the complaint about the freedom of discussion in different publications, it was hardly necessary for him to say that he was a decided friend to a free press. He did not deny that this freedom was sometimes carried to an unjustifiable length. Ministers had shown their disposition to give no countenance to publications of this kind, by referring the French government to the tribunals of the country. This answer was not held satisfactory by the French government, and a spirit of distrust and animosity continued to be cherished. At the period when the first consul began to be so extremely clamorous about the evacuation of Malta, an official document of an extraordinary nature made its appearance in France. He meant the report of Sebastiani. The publication of this report unfolded projects which could not fail to attract the peculiar notice of ministers. In every page one most important lesson was to be collected, that the views of the first consul relative to Egypt had not been abandoned. It was clearly seen, that the possession of that colony was the constant object of his ambition. In a formal conference, the first consul had not hesitated to declare that Egypt must sooner or later be in the possession of France. He would put it to the candour of their lordships, whether ministers were not entitled to demand from the French government some security for its future views relative to Egyyt, beyond what the treaty of Amiens provided. In the continued possession of Malta, ministers conceived that this security would be found; and hence originated the importance which the possession of the island afterwards assumed. Malta, in the hands of this country, could only be viewed as a security. It could afford to France, or any other power, no reasonable ground of jealousy. But, independent of these considerations, there were others which justified ministers in retaining the island. When the treaty of Amiens was formed, and the island was to be restored to the order of Saint John of Jerusalem, certain revenues were understood to be appropriated to their support, in a way consistent with the objects which the treaty proposed to establish. Without this support it was absurd to talk of that independence which the treaty guaranteed. But in Spain the revenues of the order had been confiscated: The same thing had taken place in Italy and in Bavaria. The French government, so far from opposing this sequestration, appeared to have encouraged it, in a way which showed a disinclination to the execution of the treaty. After pursuing this line of conduct, it was with a bad grace that the first consul came forward to insist on the peremptory execution of the treaty.—As long as the hope of peace could be entertained, ministers had shown the utmost reluctance to resort to a renewal of hostilities. When, however, the conduct of the French government had become such as could no longer be tolerated, it became parliament and the country to speak in terms of suitable indignation of these repeated acts of aggression. If the conduct of ministers was in any respect to be blamed, it was, that they had not much earlier shown a determination no longer to suffer the insults or the injuries of the French government to pass with impunity. Under all these circumstances, he thought there could be no difficulty in agreeing to the address with which he should conclude.—The noble lord then moved an Address couched in the same words as the one moved in the Commons [see p. 1386.]

The Duke of *Cumberland* said:—My Lords; the question which arises out of the papers appears to me to be nothing less than a question, whether this country, which has so long held a distinguished rank among the nations, shall or shall not cease to be an independent country? for if we were patiently to submit to that accumulation of aggression, injustice, and insult which has been the continued system of the French government with respect to this country, we must descend from that rank, and take our place among the vanquished and feeble nations which have become the prey of French ambition and plunder. My lords, notwithstanding the clear statement of the noble secretary, I must go over in detail the wrongs and insults which this country has endured, and which now call for the address, which has been moved: I must trace those wrongs to the first consul of France; and speaking only of him as consul, I must ask, which of the nations of Europe is it that he has not subdued or endeavoured to subdue, and place in the rank of obsequious vassal nations? Where is Holland, which for a century maintained, by its industry, a most respectable rank among the European nations? That nation is now trampled down by his legions, who, to add insult to their injuries, call themselves

Digitized by Google

allies? Where is the free, the virtuous, and the gallant Swiss nation? For centuries they, too, in the bosom of peace, had cultivated the virtues, the sciences, and the useful arts. They had not meddled in the strife of nations; they always preserved the most honourable neutrality; but the destroyer came, and swept away the produce of the industry of ages, and what was dearer to them than their wealth, their independence and ancient liberties. Where is Italy now? Italy, which for ages has not lifted its head among contending empires, but whose ambition has been to call back into civilized Europe the monuments of antient arts, the sciences, and the taste of the early ages of Greece, refined by every improvement of modern times? Where now are those unoffending countries? They all lie at the proud feet of France, to endure either the anger or the clemency of their conquerors. How is France herself situated? After the millions of lives that she has lost in the late sanguinary war, after that waste of treasure which has ruined her subjects and exhausted her finances, what is it she has gained? We were told this was a war for liberty! what liberty has she gained? Personal liberty has been violated in France without limits; exile, deportation, and Guiana, are the conquences of giving any offence to the consular government. It is there in vain to appeal to laws against high authority; and as for the liberty of the press, it is there unknown. My lords, I will now recite a few of the various indignities which have been offered to this nation by the French government. Among their first acquisitions since the peace, was Lombardy; then followed Elba, Piedmont, Parma, and Switzerland. Holland was overrun with French troops; and as to this country, if it could submit to the unjust pretensions of France, it would soon be in as degraded a situation as any of those small nations which were obliged to bow to the mandates of a French minister. The French government had ventured to say, "England is no longer able, single-handed, to contend with France." Insolent as this declaration was, they had formed so erroneous an opinion of the spirit and resources of this country, as to believe it true. Towards our commerce, they had, in time of peace, acted with the most inveterate hostility. By force and injustice, they not only prohibited the entrance of our manufactures into their country, but excluded them from every country which was under their influence. The report of Sebastiani boldly avowed the ambitious projects of France with respect to Egypt and India. This country has also been told that it has nothing to do with the affairs of Europe, or with the oppressions and vexations that France may please to exercise on other nations, and that all our rights are derived from the treaty of Amiens. When did Great Britain forfeit the rank that she has hitherto held among nations? But the French government were not content with endeavouring to regulate the affairs of other countries; they wished to introduce their impracticable systems, and destructive innovations, into the constitution and laws of this country. Of all the institutions which have been dear to our ancestors and ourselves, there was none that displeased them more than the liberty of the press. This was peculiarly galling to a government whose measures could not bear free discussion; but his majesty's government were too sensible of the blessings of the constitution to surrender them at the bidding of any foreign power; and least of all to a power which, when nominally at peace with us, acted with all the rancour and hostility of an ancient and inveterate enemy." His royal highness concluded by expressing his firm persuasion, that if this war was prosecuted with vigour, it would be crowned with success, and that we should be able to convince the world, that we had not degenerated from the spirit of our ancestors, and that there is still in Europe, a powerful and unconquered nation, always ready to defend its own dignity, and to oppose lawless ambition.

Earl *Stanhope* said, he should attempt to state what the real differences betwixt the two countries were. A proposition was brought forward by ministers, that Malta should remain in the hands of this country for ten years, whereas, by the treaty of peace, it was to be given up by this country in three months after the ratification. He would not say, that no circumstances might have taken place, which rendered the non-execution of the stipulation expedient. Whether such circumstances did occur was the subject for examination. Now with reference to the possession of Malta, had ministers always represented it as the grand object of dispute? In p. 83 of the correspondence he found, that the acceptance of a projet

Digitized by Google

relative to Malta, would, according to the representation of lord Hawkesbury, remove one of the most material difficulties existing betwixt the two governments. For himself, he was ready to confess, that there was an object much dearer to his heart than the possession of Malta—the maintenance of the constitution and liberties of the country. He did not think that, in the principle on which the retention of Malta was required, ministers were justified. Their argument was, that because, since the signature of the definitive treaty, France had received a considerable accession of power, therefore England was required to hold Malta by way of additional security. To such a principle he never could give his approbation. Supposing Cuba had, during the intermediate period, been ceded to this country by Spain, or Sicily by the king of Naples, what would any of their lordships think if Buonaparté had come to this country with a demand for additional security? Was there a single individual who would not have spurned at such a requisition? How, then, were ministers justified in the principle they had laid down for the retention of Malta? But he was ready to admit, for the sake of argument, the principle which ministers seemed so anxious to establish, and all that he had to require on his part was, that, if their proposition was true in principle, they would have no objection to his contending that it ought to be equally true in point of fact. With this understanding he should contend, that instead of the power of France being augmented since the peace, it had been materially decreased. In Europe it might be said, that it had been increased; but this was a necessary consequence of antecedent events. But, what was the decrease of influence and power, which the French government had sustained in other parts of the world? Since the signature of the definitve treaty, the important colony of St. Domingo had been lost to France. But how had she it? Previous to the first consul's sending troops to that island, there were a set of persons at Paris, called "Amis des Noirs." These persons had established such a system of goodwill towards the blacks as would at any time have commanded 500,000 fighting men in the West Indies. Now, with such an army, headed by French officers, what might not be expected! Had that system been pursued, Jamaica, and the whole of our islands must have fallen beneath the irresistible power of France. Here then was a source of power at that time within the reach, if not in the actual possession of France. This not only extended to us, it also reached Spain. France, through the same means, might have possessed herself of Cuba, Porto Rico, Mexico, and Peru. The existence of our whole West India possessions might have been exposed to the most imminent peril; but now all this danger had disappeared. By the unwise conduct of the first consul; for whatever was contrary to the rights of man, he must always consider unwise; a system of extermination had been pursued, by which the blacks were exasperated to madness, and France was deprived of one of the richest colonies of the world. But ministers, after all this, still reverted to the views of Buonaparté respecting Egypt. Putting this question fairly, was it meant to be insinuated, that the predilection of Buonaparté for Egypt was any thing novel? Did he not, for the accomplishment of this object, sacrifice one of the bravest armies that ever followed the fortunes of a favourite general? The first consul having at one time expressed a strong inclination to obtain Egypt, was not a sufficient ground for the retention of it, in the way in which it was by ministers proposed to be retained. There appeared something laughable in the whole arrangements relative to the retention of Malta. The ultimatum of ministers was, that Malta should remain in our possession for ten years. Now, what was the object of such an arrangement? Was there any thing mysterious in having Malta in our possession by a bond for ten years? After the ten years were expired, were the ambitious views of Buonaparté to be moderated? He differed from ministers on the simple principle, that Malta ought to be kept in perpetuity by this country. But they did not rest their case with Malta. They had a long string of complaints against the French government, respecting the curtailment of the liberty of the press, the dismissal of emigrants, and the seditious publications of bishops. The insolence of Buonaparté, in requiring these concessions to his haughty demands, had been made a subject of general complaint. But, after having perused the papers with the utmost attention, he saw no proof of his insolence. If the French government really required that the liberty of the press should be curtailed, that the freedom of discussion in

Digitized by Google

both Houses of parliament should be limited, then ministers ought to have insisted on an immediate explanation. If the answer of the French government was not satisfactory, they ought to have recalled our minister that day, and on the succeeding day our cannon ought to have roared to avenge the insult offered to the national honour. He allowed that he had seen some late publications of a most mischievous tendency. Some of them were indeed of a nature which could not be justified on any principle of regard to the rights of independent states. It was of great importance that the liberty of the press, as it ought to be exercised, should be accurately defined. He wished to state the views which he entertained on the subject. The criterion as to what was false, scandalous, and scurrilous, was what would be tolerated with respect to the ministers of the crown. What could not be applied to their conduct, it was criminal to apply to the conduct of the first magistrates of other countries. On this point he thought the first consul had a right to complain; because it does not appear that any specific case of insolence on the part of the government of France was established. The plain objection against ministers was this, that they did not make a specific remonstrance. They suffered past injuries to pass over unnoticed. They continued to negotiate about Malta; and they have no right now to hold up these as real grounds of war. The noble lord concluded by saying that he should vote against the address, as it was now formed, whatever his sentiments of indignation were against French ambition. Before he sat down, he paid some high compliments to Mr. Addington, whose uprightness of conduct demanded the highest approbation. He was confident of his sincere desire of peace, and thought that even still an effort might be made to maintain the continuance of tranquillity betwixt the two governments.

The Duke of *Clarence* said, that he was one of those who had voted for peace, and supported ministers in executing the treaty of Amiens, because he had perceived the general wish for peace: on that account, he accorded with it, though he never thought it could be lasting; and he would add, that he was considerably disappointed when he heard it was signed. But, under existing circumstances, he had no doubt that ministers had done the best for the country. After having read over many of the papers, and commented on them with great perspicuity, he called their lordships attention to Malta, which he impressively stated would be a place of defence, and not of offence, in the hands of Great Britain; but in the possession of France, it would necessarily lead to the most dangerous consequences: from Toulon a squadron might sail to Malta, from Malta to Egypt, and from Egypt to our Eastern possessions. The noble earl had said, that, by the conduct of the first consul himself, St. Domingo was lost to France. He thought differently; and was of opinion that France lost St. Domingo through this country, which had lately opened its eyes to the designs of a few desperate men. It was in consequence of his majesty's message of the 9th of March, that it might be said to the French government, "You shall not have St. Domingo, you shall not have Louisiana; to Spain, you shall not have the Floridas;" and to her ally the Batavian republic I would say, "You shall not have the Cape of Good Hope, you shall not have any thing but what Great Britain pleases to give you." I wish to see this country exert her vast resources, to convince this mighty hero that we are able to contend single handed against France and all her accessions. I wish to see Great Britain chastise France. It is not the first time that we have done so: and if the war be conducted with vigour and wisdom, I think it cannot last long.

Lord *Mulgrave* thought the oppressions exercised by France over other powers, to aggrandize her empire, was a sufficient reason for us to refuse to surrender Malta; but by the letter of the treaty, we were bound to surrender Malta to the order, who were to be restored to their ancient privileges; instead of that, the order had been stripped by France, both of its property and privileges. A grand master had been chosen, by the pope, who was himself a vassal of France, and therefore to restore it now, would be only giving it into the hands of France, as a key to the possession of Egypt. If ministers were to bear longer the insolence of the French government, they might have Napper Tandy sent over to them, as a commercial agent; or Arthur O'Connor, as proconsul of Britain. He therefore approved of the conduct of ministers on this occasion.

Lord *Melville* rose to give his hearty

Digitized by Google

concurrence to the address, and in pledging himself to support his majesty in the maintenance of the just rights and interests of the country, he begged leave to explain the sentiments he entertained upon this important subject. In alluding to Malta, he observed, that this question was now freed from much of the perplexity in which it had been involved. He rejoiced that the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens was incapable of being carried into execution. He thought it matter of congratulation that the French, by their obstinacy, had prevented any new and adequate arrangement for the independence of Malta from being substituted in the room of that which circumstances had so completely rendered impracticable. What, indeed, would have been the situation of Malta with all its guarantees? Was the guarantee of Spain, of Prussia, of France, to be relied upon? It would not be pretended that such securities were of any avail. The only guarantee of importance, was that of Russia, in conjunction with Great Britain. He spoke of the importance of Russia in such an arrangement with the greatest satisfaction, for he considered it mutually for the interest of the two countries to cherish the strictest union and alliance. Nevertheless, he was happy that the guarantee of Russia was not to be attached to an arrangement in every way so inadequate to the object it had in view. It was, in fact, most advantageous for Russia that Malta should be under the protection of Great Britain. It was Great Britain alone which, by its naval superiority, by its capacity to avail itself of the harbours and naval station of Malta, was calculated to be the custodier of Malta. Every other plan for its protection and independence was futile and inadequate. Now indeed he was at liberty to contemplate the possibility of realising an object of so much importance as the settlement of Malta under British protection. Well did he remember the melancholy moments he had passed, when, after reading the definitive treaty, he found Malta exposed to the danger of falling into the hands of a power that would employ it for our destruction. The importance of that island had long appeared to him to be very great, and Europe had in the most decisive instances witnessed it. By means of Malta it was that the French had attacked and made themselves masters of Egypt. By Malta it was that we had been enabled to recover that possession. If Malta remained in our hands, it was impossible that all the efforts of France, that all the armaments she could send forth, could obtain possession of Egypt, while we, with a superior navy, had the opportunity of availing ourselves of the harbours of Malta. Malta, therefore, was to be considered as of infinite importance to the strengthening and security of our empire in India. He considered it as a rock or great tower erected in the Mediterranean, on which the flag of Great Britain, displayed and floating, would hold forth an invitation to the people of the Mediterranean, of the Adriatic, and of the Levant seas, to rally round it, and to avail themselves of the protection of this country. It therefore was subject of congratulation that, without any charge upon our good faith, an opportunity had occurred in which the 10th article of the treaty could not be executed. As we were now going to war, and as Malta formed one of the main objects of the war, he wished that its value should be fully understood, and that we should likewise keep in view the necessity of availing ourselves of its advantages to the utmost. He hoped to hear no more of the order being restored; or of the independence of the island being in any manner guaranteed. While Great Britain was able to keep a superior fleet in the harbours of Malta, in the protection of Great Britain it would be secure. It was evident what great interests depended upon the retention of Malta; were we then to give up that possession which was so essential to those interests? If, then, we were going to war for Malta, it was an object to animate the courage and reward the achievements of our fleets and armies. We should go to war, therefore, upon this ground, as a broad question both of right and of general policy. In this view it was matter of congratulation that Malta was to be considered as a British object. We had now got rid of any consideration of the knights of St. John. What was the situation of those knights when we obtained possession of the island? They had degraded and overthrown their order by an act of perfidy; nor could they be restored without the severest injury to the people of the island. The order had become odious to the Maltese by the act of treachery by which they had put them under the government of France, and it was doubtful whether the Maltese

Digitized by Google

would not have deemed themselves less unfortunate in being transferred to France, than in being again placed under the command of an order which they had so much reason to hate and to distrust. Besides, it was to be considered, that we went to the aid of the Maltese, previously engaged in the reduction of the French; and it was greatly against the wishes of the people that the order was to be reinstated upon any terms. We ought, therefore, to secure to the Maltese a wise and suitable form of civil government, to be enjoyed by them under the protection of the British power. He considered the retention of Malta for ever to be a most essential object, and one to which, in the relative circumstances of France and this country, we were fully entitled to prosecute by a war. In voting for the address, we therefore voted our concurrence in the war, of which that was the principal object. The attainment of it would be of the utmost benefit to all the states of the Levant, and under our protection alone Malta could be rendered independent and happy.

The Duke of *Richmond* was of opinion that there were not, and particularly with respect to Malta, sufficient grounds for the renewal of hostilities. It appeared that ministers would have been satisfied with the possession of Lampedosa before the late explosion, and the ultimatum proposed to the French government, that at the end of ten years Malta should be given up to the inhabitants for that very island. He did not, therefore, like to hear them talk of going to war for an island which, they admitted themselves, they would relinquish at the expiration of a given time. On an impartial consideration of the papers, he did not hesitate to say that the treaty of Amiens ought to be maintained.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* said, it was from the consideration of all the papers submitted to their lordships, that they were called upon to decide whether war was just and necessary. He had heard a great deal about the liberty of the press, but he never could bring himself to think it stood in need of protection, while the trial by jury was enjoyed by British subjects. The different points in dispute required a most minute consideration, to enable the House to come to a decision. He should not take them upon rumour, but reason upon facts. All that had been said of Holland, of its distresses and sufferings, and of its intimate connexion with Great Britain as to common interest, had been very much exaggerated and twisted to serve particular ends. There was nothing, at all events, of such necessity as to press this country into hostilities on account of Holland. With respect to Switzerland, notwithstanding its boasted independence, it was undeniable that it belonged to other powers, and not to us to interfere for its deliverance. Austria had clearly a more powerful cause to interpose than us, yet she was deaf to those complaints in which her own interests were allowed to be most materially implicated. It was stated, that France had acted in the most arbitrary manner with regard to the seizure of Parma and Placentia. He could not find any apology for an act so tyrannical; but was there no other power interested in the repression of that despotism than Great Britain? Were we upon all occasions to volunteer our resources and exertions when those more immediately interested did not think proper to interfere? Why did not Russia think proper to interfere, which openly avowed the deep concern she felt in the preservation of these countries? But then, said his lordship, another ground for going to war is discovered in the mission of Sebastiani to Egypt. I beg leave to state, that in this very instance, which is made a strong cause for the renewal of hostilities, there is nothing that can justify us in our appealing to arms, though it contains much that is offensive, in the manner of it. The governments of all countries are in the habit of sending persons abroad in order to collect information, sometimes of a commercial, and sometimes of a military nature. But it is maintained, as another cause of war, that the first consul has views upon Egypt. I have no doubt he has, and any one in his situation would be actuated by the same views. I am, however, far from thinking his designs are of a nature so alarming as they are described. Was it to be expected that all views of ambition should be extinguished in the breast of the first consul. He was far from supporting the whole of that person's character. No honest man, he believed, could approve of his conduct. Yet it was not because the first consul had developed views of ambition that we ought to conclude he intended to go to war with us. Our business it was, not to allow ourselves to be hurried away by disapprobation of the

Digitized by Google

first consul's measures, or by an exaggerated alarm at his ambition, but to follow a steady course of national policy. When I hear the importance of Malta so much cried up, your lordships will pardon me if I do not lay such stress upon the acquisition of that island. How comes it that the great importance of Malta has all at once started into notice? Five years ago it was not thought of so much value, when it was offered to this country by the grand master. Besides, as it is in our possession, where is the necessity that compels us to go to war for it? Is it to secure that which might have been done by negotiation? I fervently hope that means may be devised for keeping the door open to negotiation. Let us first try every possible way to obtain by conciliation the objects we are desirous of possessing; and if our efforts fail, let us then have recourse to arms. Let us profit by the example of the American war, and take care that our discretion and prudence be not sacrificed to false glory.

The Duke of *Norfolk* could not think of calling on ministers to give up Malta to France; but he hoped that the benefits of peace would not be lightly thrown away on the provocation of the moment. He hoped that the guarantee of Russia might still be obtained, upon this head. He wished that it should be the recommendation of this House to his majesty, that no mediation should be refused, that would hold out a hope of securing the peace of Europe, but if the independence of Europe, and the honour of the country could no otherwise be obtained, then he would agree to meet again the miseries and difficulties of war.

Lord *King* said, that though the situation of Europe was alarming, he did not see the present moment favourable for attempting to redress what was wrong. Single handed, we could make no great impression on France; nor could the capture of her colonies seriously reduce her power. France was not made up of various, separate, and detached settlements; nor did her resources depend on distant colonies, or foreign commerce. She was a great territorial, military, and condensed power; and not to be greatly repressed by a power of a different description, like that of England. He doubted greatly the prudence of going to war at this juncture. Malta was an important object, but not worth purchasing at the expense of war. He proposed an amendment, the object of which was to leave out part of the address, and to substitute a new paragraph, the purport of which was, that the House would see with satisfaction, that his majesty would listen to any farther offer of amicable settlement, consistent with the honour and interests of the country.

Lord *Ellenborough* expressed his surprise at the amendment moved by the noble lord, at a period when unanimity was so peremptorily called for. Was it to be asked, after the accumulation of insults and injuries heaped upon this country by France what we went to war for? He would answer, that we went to war for the reparation of our wrongs. It had been said by a noble duke, that we went to war for the island of Lampedosa; he denied it: we went to war for our constitutional liberties, our independence, and our commerce. The question was, whether we were to enjoy our civil liberty and our right of legislating for ourselves, or whether, for the first time, we were to be dictated to by any foreign power, whether a legitimate sovereign or an usurper, whether we would surrender the island to a foreign foe, and with it our dearest rights and most valuable privileges. He agreed that they were deeply responsible for the vote which they should that night give: but there were considerations abundantly sufficient to justify their vote in favour of hostilities. The article of the treaty of Amiens, which related to Malta, was rendered, by the acts of France, entirely incapable of execution. Not only the revenues were subtracted which were appropriated to the support of the order, but the guarantees were denied, except in the case of Austria. Some new arrangements became absolutely necessary, and this of course became a principal subject of negotiation. He would not go the length of saying, that Malta should remain to us in perpetuity, and that therefore the article ought not to be fulfilled in any respect. He thought, on the contrary, that, according to the acknowledged law of nations, where an article of a treaty could not, in consequence of subsequent circumstances, be executed, an arrangement should be made to bring the object as nearly as possible back to the original intention. We never had been in a case where the surrender of Malta could be justly demanded of us: and no one could contend that we ought, under the circumstances of the case in which we were placed, to have given it up. If they looked to

Digitized by Google

the papers, they found matter which involved the nerve and the feelings of the whole country, which involved that palladium of our liberty, the freedom of the press, and which involved the consideration of our dearest rights and constitutional liberties. He trusted, that while the licentiousness of the press was restrained, this country would never surrender its just liberty of the press; that that press would never be subject to a foreign imprimatur; that our constitutional liberty would never be violated, nor the stream of justice diverted from its course, at the instance of a foreign foe. When they examined the paper dated the 9th of February, they found the views of the French government sufficiently developed in the act of a man, who, it was evident, was clothed in the garb of authority. Was it prudent to give up Malta at that period when they saw the spear in the hands of the enemy? When they saw that an army of 25,000 men, destined for one purpose, was easily convertible to another? In Switzerland had there not been, on the part of France, a direct violation of the treaty of Luneville? When all the hostile acts committed by France stared them in the face, was it to be asked, why go to war? As to the proposition made on our part for the retention of Malta for ten years, such an arrangement was sufficient evidence of our sincere desire of peace. In the course of that time, many circumssances might have occurred to render the face of affairs upon the continent wholly different. The present war was the result of injuries accumulated upon this country by France. It might, in its consequences, oppress private families; and therefore nothing but a deep sense of the justice of our cause would have induced him to assent to the address. Though the present was a crisis of peril, yet there was no cause for despondency. Though we had not among us the heroes of Cressy or of Agincourt, yet we had living among us, the heroes of Acre, of the Nile, of St. Vincent, and of Camperdown, who were fully equal to the task of directing the energies of the country, and pursuing to a successful termination the contest in which we were engaged. He trusted, that congenial spirit would produce congenial effect, both in our naval and military service; and that all petty considerations would be merged in the essential interests of the British empire.

The Earl of *Moira* regretted that an amendment had been proposed which could produce the least diversity of sentiment upon an occasion when unanimity was so desirable. Passing from this amendment, which he hoped would not be pressed, he took notice of the manner in which a learned judge had treated the complaints of the French government, with respect to the publications in this country, referring to its administration; and upon this point he was ready to admit the candour of the noble secretary of state as to the offensive tendency of the general tenor of those publications. Among those, however, he did not mean so much to dwell upon the sentiments of the English newspapers as upon those which appeared in French newspapers published in London, particularly the Courier de Londres, a paper understood to be in a great degree under the peculiar patronage of his majesty's ministers. If so, the French government had just reason to complain. It was reviled in the grossest terms in this publication, and why, he would ask, should a paper be suffered to pursue that system of conduct which must operate to disturb the amity subsisting between the two governments, more particularly when government had power, under the Alien act, to send the editor out of the country? We were not in that state in which we were to consider merely the justice or expediency of the war, but whether this country should continue to enjoy that independence which belonged to her, or should submit to the absolute dictation of a French ambassador; but he could not accede to the proposition, that Malta alone would have been a rational ground for war; because, if that island had been completely ceded to us, it would have afforded a degree of security infinitely short of what we had a right to expect, and what it became necessary for us now to seek. The objects for which we had to contend were of a wider and more important nature. Our jealousy and alarm was excited by that incorrigible spirit of encroachment and ambition which the government of France had manifested. Were not Holland, Piedmont, and Switzerland, just subjects of our solicitude? The main object of the war must be to restrain the arrogance, to reduce the preponderance of the French government; and until that object be attained, the war should not be abandoned. It was quite competent to Great Britain to bring this overgrown authority within reasonable bounds; but it

Digitized by Google

must be done by vigorous efforts, by a short and decisive war, not by petty attempts with respect to Malta, or any comparatively inferior object, or by any colonial expeditions, calculated to cramp the energy and waste the strength of the country.

Earl *Spencer* said, he had no hesitation in giving it as his decided opinion, that upon the face of the whole negotiation, this country had not only a just, but an indispensable cause of war against France. He should therefore give his hearty support to the address, rather than to the amendment, which, by prolonging a temporizing system, would lead to no possible advantage, but rather exhaust the means of our security, and allow the French government time to gain new advantages. He trusted, now that war was rendered inevitable, the House and the country would be unanimous in enabling his majesty to prosecute it with energy. He trusted that our resources would be wisely and energetically administered; and this done, no doubt could remain of success.

The Earl of *Rosslyn*, although he agreed with lord Melville, that Malta alone would be a sufficient ground of war, yet thought it evident, that the whole system of France, since the peace, and her many breaches of good faith, amounted to an abundant cause of war, on our part. He considered the menacing language, held forth by Buonaparté to lord Whitworth, as a sufficient cause of war. His whole conduct, since he signed the treaty, was an uniform system of arrogance, insult, and injury. His views against the Turkish empire, which he did not take the trouble to conceal, were contrary to the letter of the treaty of Amiens, and therefore a ground of war. He wished that this should not be considered as a war likely to be short, but as one so absolutely necessary, that our only wish should be, to carry it on with vigour and success.

Lord *Grenville* said, that the address was drawn up in terms with which he heartily concurred, because they were congenial with those sentiments of national honour which formed the best security for the country. No man felt more strongly than he did the calamities which must attend a state of war, and the activity which ought of course to be employed to preserve mankind from such an evil; but the best way of warding it off was, not by appearing to feel too much afraid of it, for that might serve only to postpone the danger, and when it again approached, its advances might become irresistible, and its evils aggravated. It was in order to guard against such a war, that he had for some time back recommended a line of policy to ministers which he was convinced would have been much more effectual towards avoiding war than the course they had pursued. He condemned their system; and he had before stated distinctly the reasons of his opinion. In considering the subject which his majesty's declaration involved, two questions arose; the one related to the policy of concurring with his majesty to maintain the honour of his crown and the interests of his people; the other as to the conduct of ministers since the termination of the last war. The latter point he would exclude from the question before the House, as it was meant to form the subject of consideration on a future day. In offering his majesty the solemn assurance of his support, he was not induced to do so in order to rectify the errors of the treaty of Amiens, or to sustain any deviation from it. For it was his wish that that treaty should be adhered to strictly: the public faith stood pledged for it; but it seemed impossible to conform to that treaty. The article with respect to Malta was evidently impracticable; but it is now stated that it would have been practicable if new circumstances had not arisen. What were they, he would ask, which did not actually exist, or were on the brink of existing, at the time when the treaty was signed? Yet he never did say that those errors would be a fair ground for war; he stronly recommended that they should be removed, not by war, but by amicable negotiation. A noble earl had said, that as Malta was so valuable, a proposition ought to be made to the French government, to give in exchange for Malta the islands of Guernsey and Jersey. This was an idea not to be endured. What! would the noble earl, who professed himself an advocate for liberty, recommend to have so many thousand British subjects transferred to the most degrading slavery that existed in the world? The act was beyond the power of the House to attempt, because their lordships were incapable of injustice. Returning to the question before the House, he observed that he was happy to see such a spirit reviving in that

Digitized by Google

House and in the country, as would enable us to meet a war with dignity, from which we could not recede without meanness—a war which was not a matter of choice on our part, but of necessity. It was unnecessary to eke out arguments to prove a case of aggression; the facts were glaring. There were acts and proofs enough to urge the House and the country to prepare for determined, effective, energetic war. Whatever inconveniences they may endure—whatever burthens they may incur—it is better to begin the contest now, than wait until we should be obliged to engage in it, with perhaps diminished means, and against increased forces. The French government had given such direct evidence of an intention to violate the treaty of Amiens, that even on the grounds of prevention war was justifiable. The designs of Buonaparté on the Turkish empire were notorious. Though he had in the treaty of Amiens guaranteed the integrity of that empire, yet the French government had actually proposed to other governments the partition of the Turkish territories, and her share would no doubt comprehend Egypt. Without taking Sebastiani's report at all into account, the circumstance alluded to in the declaration is quite sufficient to warrant the inference, that the first consul meditated a breach of the treaty of Amiens. Under all these circumstances, peace or war was not a matter of choice; and he would suggest to the noble lord who proposed the amendment, that as temporising had already produced no other effect than to torture the people of this country by suspense, and embolden the pretensions of the first consul, it would not be adviseable to make any farther experiments in that way. The man who now governed France was not to be conciliated into the practice of justice by the appearance of submission. Being convinced that war alone was the remedy left for the country, he would strongly exhort to every possible exertion; and he thought that no expectation should be held out that the struggle would be short. The people should be fully apprized, that the contest is not of a light or trifling kind, to be encountered by ordinary exertions, but by a spirit exalted and equal to the magnitude of the occasion.

The House divided; for the Amendment, 10; Against it, 142. The original address was then agreed to.

List of the Minority.

Duke of Bedford	Earl Thanet
Leinster	Albemarle
Earl of Derby	Stanhope
Cowper	Guildford
Besborough	Lord King

The King's Message relative to calling out the Supplementary Militia.] May 25. The Chancellor of the Exchequer brought down the following message:

"GEORGE *R.*: His majesty thinks it proper to acquaint the House of Commons, that he has judged it necessary to adopt, without delay, all the means within his power, which may contribute to defeat the avowed designs of the enemy, and to afford the most effectual protection and security to his faithful people.

"In pursuance, therefore, of the act of parliament, enabling his majesty to increase the number of his militia forces, his majesty makes this communication to the House of Commons, to the end that his majesty may cause the supplementary militia to be forthwith raised and enrolled, and thereafter to be drawn out and embodied, and marched as occasion may require. G. *R.*"

Spiritual Persons Relief Bill.] April 6. Sir *W. Scott* said, that ever since the establishment of religion in this country, there were existing laws which regulated the national church, and these laws enforced the clergy to give the strictest attention to the duties of the church, as well as allowing a certain provision to render her members comfortable. But these ancient laws had for centuries lain dormant. There were also several acts of a more recent date: in lord Bacon's time, laws were framed for the regulation of the clergy; the letter and spirit of them were nearly the same as those of an anterior date, but which had also lain dormant till within these five years, since which time they had been brought into use, and, he was sorry to say, to the injury of many worthy men. Among the members of the church of England, were many characters who were the highest honour to the nation; men of simple habits, amiable dispositions, and laborious life, who were liable to feel the effect of one of these old statutes, and who would rather redeem themselves with money, than suffer the exposure which an information, founded on the act of Henry 8th would enforce. Notwithstanding, it was his wish that some measure should be

Digitized by Google

adopted to make the clergy attentive to the duties of the church. As the laws stood at present, relative to the duty of clergymen, they doubtless contained many defects, and it was high time to do what my lord Coke had recommended above 150 years ago, that was, to revise the statutes applicable to the regulation of the church. By the advice of his friends, he had undertaken to give this subject serious consideration. On a former occasion, he had expressed his wish that time should be given to deliberate on the bill then before the House; but every member must recollect what a mob of bills rushed through the House in the last agony of that parliament; yet he did not expect that the former bill would have been one of them. With respect to the present bill, it was fundamentally the same as the former one. It contained an exemption to several persons; whether this was right he would leave the House to decide. He had not made any provision for the parochial clergy; that he thought ought to come from another quarter. It was his wish that the parsonage houses should be put in proper repair for the reception of their proper inhabitants; from the decay these dwellings had been suffered to go into, many clergymen were under the necessity of residing at a great distance from their duty. As to those benefices to which there was no house attached, some provision ought to be made to render the clergy more comfortable. With respect to the small benefices, something had been done by Mr. Gilbert's act, but it had not gone far enough to be of real service to this order of the clergy. The method he should propose would be, that government should advance a sum of money, as a fund, to mend the stipends of curates; this he thought necessary for the better support of those numerous, worthy, laborious men, on whom the religion and morality of the country so much depended. He hoped the measure would be found calculated to answer every purpose for which it was designed; and moved for leave to bring in a bill, "to amend and render more effectual the laws relating to spiritual persons holding of farms, and for enforcing the residence of spiritual persons on their benefices."—Leave was given, and the bill was afterwards brought in, and repeatedly committed.

May 26. On the order of the day for the third reading,

Sir *Francis Burdett* said, that of all the objectionable proceedings that ever occupied his attention, he conceived this to be the most unjust. It might be entitled "A bill for enslaving and degrading the clergy of the established church;" for, by this bill the clergy were left at the mercy of the bishops, and also of the minister of the day. He would rather submit to the operation of the very worst laws that could be framed, than to the will of any individual. This bill also affected the property of those concerned in a material degree; for if a parent had laid out, under the sanction of the old laws, a sum of money as a provision for his son, either in point of education or, in any other way in which the church was concerned, he might be dismissed, by not immediately attending to the admonition of the bishop, though it might be a point in which his whole fortune was engaged. This was a state of degradation to which the members of the established church should not be reduced. This House had already adopted the principle, that when a man was once a clergyman, he should always remain so; so that if a clergyman were inclined, in consequence of the operation of this bill, to change his profession, he had no power of doing so. He objected to the bill, on the grounds of the discretionary power which it lodged in the bishops. If one bishop gave a clergyman a licence to go abroad for two or three years as tutor to a nobleman or gentleman's son, that bishop might in the mean time be translated, and his successor be actuated by different sentiments: so that when this clergyman came home, he would probably find another person in possession of his benefice, which in some degree might be considered as his freehold estate. He also objected to this dispensing power of the bishops on other grounds. The clergy in general possessed a right of voting for members of parliament; now this bill left so many voters at the mercy of ministers, through the medium of the bishops, that he considered it extremely dangerous in that point of view. It was a violation of every principle of justice, to place men, by an *ex post facto* law in such a situation. It was well known, that the bishop of St. David's previous to an election, had sent a circular letter to the clergymen of his diocese, to influence them on that occasion; but even that step would not be necessary in future; for this bill gave the bishops such

Digitized by Google

an absolute control over the clergy, that no one would dare to vote in opposition to them. He thought, for his part, that, instead of giving such control, there should be an injunction on the bishops to set the example in point of discharge of duty. The bishop of Landaff held the situation of regius professor at Cambridge; he also held a living in Huntingdonshire, and an archdeaconry in another place; and yet he lived in Cumberland. He objected to the committing of persons to the discretion of men, not to be trusted any more than themselves. It was doing away all ideas of liberty and independence; and upon grounds of constitutional jealousy, he felt himself called upon to oppose the bill.

The bill was read a third time. On the motion, that it do pass, the House divided:

	Tellers	
Yeas	Sir John Nicholl ..... / Mr. Solicitor General ...	50
Noes	Sir Francis Burdett ..... / Mr. L. Dundas.....	5

Debate on Mr. Fox's Motion respecting the Mediation of Russia.] May 27. Mr. *Fox* rose, for the purpose of making his promised motion respecting the mediation of the emperor of Russia to adjust the existing differences between this country and France. He observed, that although, from the time and circumstances under which he brought it forward, it might be considered as one of the most important ever submitted to parliament, it was one which led to no great length of discussion, nor would require him to take any very comprehensive view of the topics naturally connected with it. Into the general question of the propriety of the war, he was not disposed to enter. He had stated his opinions very fully on a former day: a great majority had differed from him; and to the judgment of that majority it was his duty to bow. The country was then actually at war, and being so, he should give the war the best support in his power. But although we were at war, and although many differences prevailed as to the grounds of it, no one would deny the propriety of bringing it as soon as possible to an honourable termination. The proposition which it was his intention to submit to the House had this object in view. It was understood, that an offer had recently been made by the emperor of Russia to interpose his mediation, or good offices, for the settlement of the differences between Great Britain and France. He wished to induce the House of Commons to advise his majesty immediately to avail himself of those friendly dispositions. On the advantages of mediation in general, it was not necessary for him to descant; still less on the advantages which must result from the mediation of that powerful, respected, and universally esteemed sovereign, the emperor of Russia. It was Mr. Fox's opinion, that even where mediation was wholly inactive, where the mediating powers lent only their names to a negotiation, the offer of it ought, under almost any circumstances, to be accepted. Even this, which was the lowest species of mediation, was useful for the sake of public opinion. What was now proposed, however, he understood to be of the higher species, and to amount to an offer, by the emperor of Russia, of an effectual interposition of his good offices; which, among other advantages, included this,—that if it should fail, through our enemy's advancing unjust claims and pretensions, and if we should be compelled by such failure to prosecute the war for objects which, in that case, must be approved by the mediating sovereign, we should secure his support, and the sanction of his great and powerful name. And what was equally material, we should have in our favour the public opinion of Europe and the world. This, let gentlemen be assured, was no trifling matter; it was a consideration of sufficient importance by itself, even if there existed no other motive, to determine in favour of the propriety of the step he was about to recommend.

It was not, however, merely for the sake of adjusting present differences that he thought the acceptance of this mediation so desirable. To that power to which ministers looked as the principal and only fit guarantee for Malta, they might naturally look for mediation on other matters; they might look for an extension of his guarantee to all the points now at issue between the governments of Great Britain and France. Thoroughly impressed with the feasibility of this plan, Mr. Fox most anxiously conjured ministers, as they valued the interests of their country and the permanent peace of Europe, not to suffer the present opportunity to escape them; not to overlook means so obvious and so practicable for the accomplishment of all

Digitized by Google

their objects, whether of security, honour, or satisfaction.

In his hopes of benefit from this measure, Mr. Fox said, that he carried his views very far. The power, the character, and the rank of the emperor of Russia, rendered him, of all sovereigns, not only the very fittest mediator on the points in dispute between Great Britain and France, but the fittest protector and guarantee of the rights of independent nations, and of the general interest of Europe. The personal character of this prince stood on the highest ground; nor could his own praise of him, Mr. Fox said, add any thing to the estimation in which he was every where held. He spoke not of his private character alone, but of his princely qualities, of his justice to the people committed to his care, of his love of peace, and of his ardent desire for its maintenance in Europe; and particularly of his wish to see peace restored between Great Britain and France, although he was not likely to be a loser by their quarrels.

The leading feature of his character, therefore, was that which most fitted him for a mediator. There was another part in it which peculiarly pointed him out as the mediator to whom we should most choose to refer our differences. This prince was understood to be very sensibly affected by many changes which had taken place in Europe since the peace of Amiens; and to have highly disapproved, and in many instances to have been disgusted with the conduct of France towards other powers since that period. It was impossible, therefore, to imagine a sovereign, whose interposition could be more consonant to what ought to be our wishes. In looking for a mediator, the two points concerning which it would most import us to be satisfied, were, his character and his opinions. The first qualification, as he had already stated, was a love of peace; the second, a dislike and disapprobation of those acts which either directly or remotely constituted the cause of the dispute on which he was to mediate. Both these were eminently conspicuous in the illustrious sovereign of whom he was then speaking.

With respect to the beneficial consequences which would attend the acceptance of his mediation on a more extended scale, Mr. Fox was very sanguine. He would state no certainty, indeed, of its producing peace, but a strong and reasonable hope. At all events, he looked forward through it to the most advantageous connection which this country could form under the present circumstances of Europe. In the actual state of affairs, what was more probable than that France, taking advantage of her condition of preparation and power, would abuse it, for the purpose of further acquisitions at the expense of the smaller and more defenceless states? This was the great evil to be apprehended from the present war: and against this evil a connection with Russia would be the surest guard, as well as afford the best hope of settling at last some solid system of peace for Europe. What other means, he would ask, had we of preventing the oppression of the smaller states, by France, if she should be disposed to attempt it? What means had we of our own? And after France had testified a disposition to accept the mediation, how would it appear to Europe were we to decline the offer?

No expression implying the superiority of any other power was fit to be used in speaking of Great Britain and its interests; but he would ask, was there ever a sovereign who, from his situation, was so fit to prescribe peace as the emperor of Russia? What was the language which he was enabled to hold both to this country and to France? We had a dispute with the late emperor, which, although settled, was settled upon conditions to which the court of St. Petersburgh might still continue to except, as being in a great degree harsh and disadvantageous. On the other hand, that court objected to part of an article in the treaty of Amiens, to the general conditions of which, however, she was still ready to accede upon the removal of her objection. The point was, to us, a mere trifle; no more than whether a Maltese langue should be admitted into the order. The emperor, therefore, might say fairly to us, "There were some points in my treaty with you, to which, however disadvantageous, I submitted, for my love of peace. Do you, in return, act in the same manner. You complain of an article in the treaty of Amiens, so do I of the terms of the northern convention. To these several treaties we each of us agreed for the sake of peace. Imitate, therefore, on your parts, the moderation I showed on mine, and make a sacrifice to the peace of Amiens of any trifling objection, in the same manner as I sacrificed all mine to the northern convention." But if this sove-

Digitized by Google

reign could speak in such terms to us, he could speak in much stronger terms to France. It was reported (with what truth Mr. Fox did not pretend to know), that some time since a proposition had been made from France to Russia for the dismemberment and partition of the Turkish empire. This report was alluded to in his majesty's declaration, in which paper the proposition itself was also stated to have been rejected. The emperor, therefore, stands towards the French government on the very best ground for enforcing upon it the counsels of moderation. That power, which has been so long and so justly suspected of entertaining designs hostile to the Turkish empire; that sovereign who would gain most territory, although perhaps it may not be quite so certain that he would acquire any great addition of solid strength, by the partition of its provinces, decidedly refused to lend his countenance to so iniquitous a project. The emperor of Russia, therefore, is the sovereign who is entitled to speak in the firmest language to any other European power that might be supposed to entertain similar designs against its defenceless neighbours. "You propose to me," he might say, "the dismemberment of Turkey. If I, who had the fairest hopes of advantage from that dismemberment, the standing policy of whose ancestors it has been to achieve the enterprize, and who might be supposed to be actuated by an hereditary partiality towards that object—if I refused to accede to it from a sense of what was due to justice and the rights of others, I am entitled to make the same claim upon you. I preferred peace to the gratification of my ambition. Do you the same. I abstained from attacking my neighbours. Abstain you also."

Such was the language which the emperor of Russia could hold towards France, and which most probably he would be induced to hold, if his offer of mediation were accepted upon the large scale he had ventured to recommend. This sovereign, too, was peculiarly situated with regard to France, so situated as both to be inclined and enabled to succour with effect those states which might be supposed the first and most immediate objects of French aggression. Mr. Fox, therefore, again most earnestly advised the ministers to attach themselves cordially to that power, from which alone they could derive any material assistance in the prosecution of their views; whether those views were for a solid peace, or for a vigorous war. With that power alone for an ally, if they could contrive to form an alliance with it, we might be enabled to protect, and to secure from attack, all the weaker states in the European system.

If it were objected that France only agreed to the offer of mediation with a view to procrastinate, against her gaining such an advantage, Mr. Fox said it would be the duty of ministers most vigilantly to guard; but he cautioned the House against the rejection of treaties, and against repelling all approaches to negotiation, merely on account of our not being perfectly satisfied as to the good faith and general dispositions of an adverse power. If the government of France had expressed a willingness to accept the mediation, and if the people of that country in general, as every common traveller could not have failed to observe, were anxious for peace, would not our rejection of such a measure tend immediately to render the war popular among them, by throwing upon us all the odium of its commencement? Is it not for our interest to deprive the government of France of this advantage? Is it not for our interest to enter into a mediation, which, if France should render ineffectual, will lay her under the necessity of contending, not only with us, but with Russia? To submit our claims to the arbitrary decision of that court, or of any other power on earth, no man disdained more than himself; but to explain the justice of them to a friendly state, was to be considered in a very different light, especially when such a proceeding opened the way to a union with that state, upon principles of common security and defence.

Of continental connections, as they were entered into and managed by our ancestors, Mr. Fox professed himself the warm and constant friend. These connexions were either wise, or otherwise, according to circumstances; and he considered a connexion with Russia, in the present state of affairs, to be most wise and most expedient. He would not undervalue our resources, but for any practicable object in the war, except that of mere self-defence, what were our means? If our views really tended towards abridging in any degree the continental power of France, what chance had we of bringing our resources to bear upon this ob-

Digitized by Google

ject, except through the connection to which he pointed? a connection, to the forming of which the opportunity now presented to us was most happy—and might never return!

Every consideration of policy pointed this way. In looking to the rest of the continent, no other power seemed in a situation likely to afford us any assistance. On the other hand, what would Great Britain and Russia have to fear from a junction of either Prussia or the house of Austria with France? That these powers should jointly assist France against Great Britain and Russia, there never could be much reason to apprehend; that either of them should separately assist her, under the present circumstances, he saw little reason to believe. Peace was known to be the general settled system of the Prussian monarchy at present, and Austria, independent of the obvious doubts respecting her cordiality in any co-operation with France, was too much exhausted by the pressure of the late war, not to make peace absolutely necessary to her recovery. That peace is become her policy, was also to be presumed from the change in her councils, and from the elevation to power of the archduke Charles—a prince most universally respected and beloved—a prince, who after the immortal glories he has acquired in war—glories not to be diminished by defeat, since in adverse circumstances he had done all that could be expected from the greatest talents—now, happily for mankind, seems to consider it his truest glory to discharge his debt to the people who supported him throughout an arduous contest, by securing to them the enjoyment, and by cultivating for their sakes, the advantages of peace. Such was the employment of the archduke Charles, which, with the considerations he had mentioned before, led him to believe that a pacific spirit prevailed equally in the cabinets of Vienna, of Berlin, and of St. Petersburgh; offering to us the fairest opportunity that perhaps had ever occurred, of forming the union for which he was so earnest, upon the broad principles he had been endeavouring to establish.

Mr. Fox then enlarged upon the satisfaction to ourselves, and even the political advantages which would attend our conducting ourselves in such a manner as to conciliate the public opinion of Europe. Although Holland or Switzerland, or the smaller states of Italy, might not be able possibly to give us any immediate assistance, even their good wishes were not to be despised. Under the powerful protection of a Russian alliance, growing out of the mediation such as he viewed it, those good wishes might, in time, bring us allies. The measure was equally desirable, whether war or peace should be the ultimate result. From the refusal of Russia to accept the guarantee of Malta as we had originally proposed it, some persons might think she was ill-inclined towards our cause, and might be actuated by partiality towards that of France; and under this persuasion might be disposed to think that our dignity was concerned in rejecting the present overtures for mediation. No man was further than Mr. Fox from wishing this country to humble itself before Russia, and no man would advise the rejection of her interference sooner than himself, if he could entertain the slightest suspicion of her partiality to France; but so far was he from believing in any such partiality, that he was persuaded her sentiments ran in an opposite direction. Others might suspect the offer to have been made in collusion with France; if it were so, no doubt it ought to be instantly rejected; and here Mr. Fox desired to be distinctly understood, as not recommending by his motion any suspension of hostilities, whatever might be his opinion as to the rashness with which they had been begun.

Upon the whole, he felt very sanguine, and possibly this eagerness might warp his judgment, as to the beneficial effects, in a general view, which must result from the measure he was about to propose to the House. He believed that ministers would gladly have accepted this mediation, had it been proposed at an earlier period. Why, then, should not that proposal be eligible to terminate a war, which would have had a welcome reception before its commencement? Russia was the chief power on which we relied for the security of Malta against France. Her guarantee of it was to have consolidated the peace. An opportunity now was presented to us, by which we might extend that guarantee to the peace and security of Europe; to the protection and happiness of the smaller states; to the setting up, under wise management, of a bulwark and a safeguard for the world; and to the effecting a settlement, such as the events of the late war gave but little reason ever again to hope for. He

Digitized by Google

did not despair of combining together, in some great public act, all the powers without exception who were named in the guarantee of the independence of Malta. The rights of all nations, and the territories of all states, would by these means be secured against disturbance or invasion; the spirit of aggrandizement would be repressed; the mischievous practice of secret cession would be put an end to, and the world might at length enjoy some prospect of peace, by seeing the different great powers of which it was composed, act upon a principle of content with what they had gained, and of acquiescence in what they had lost. At the moment at which we seemed on the brink of eternal war, ministers had it in their power to lay the foundation of this great work; and in order to enable them to do it, he would move, "That an humble address be presented to his majesty, praying that his majesty would be graciously pleased to avail himself of the disposition expressed by the Emperor of Russia to interpose his good offices for the termination of the present war between his majesty and the French republic; an interposition which would, probably, be attended with the best advantages in support of the dignity of his majesty's crown, and for the general and permanent tranquillity of Europe."

Lord *Hawkesbury* objected to the motion upon two grounds: first, that there was no fair parliamentary ground laid for its adoption; and secondly, that, as no such ground was laid, the House should not, under the present circumstances, accede to a motion which could not be productive of any good, and might do harm, by betraying indecision. For the constitutional right of the House to interpose its advice upon the exercise of any branch of the royal prerogative, and particularly as to peace or war, he felt as much respect and regard as the hon. gentleman; but before such interference was attempted, a good case ought to be made out. As the constitution vested certain powers in the executive government, the inference naturally was, that those powers were not to be restrained or dictated to by any other branch of the legislature, but where they appeared to be abused. There were only two cases in which it was the province of any hon. member to recommend a measure to the executive government: the one where his majesty's ministers neglected to do that to which it was their duty to have attended; and the other, where the measure recommended was wholly different from the system which those ministers pursued. Now, upon neither of those grounds did he think the proposition of the hon. gentleman could be supported; for however some gentlemen might be disposed to censure ministers, he believed there were scarcely any who would charge them with neglecting any means that could be resorted to to preserve peace with honour; and in proof of that disposition, he had only to refer to his majesty's declaration. Here all Europe might see that his majesty was even now ready to enter into any arrangement consistent with the dignity of his crown, and the essential interests of his people. He would ask, what could be the motive of such an appeal, but to show the sincerity of his majesty's wishes for the restoration of peace? And after such an appeal, he would ask also, was it possible that any minister would advise his majesty to refuse any mediation that was likely to produce acceptable terms of peace? With respect to the hon. gentleman's observations on the general state of Europe, he was not at all disposed to differ with him; but as to the practicability of the coalition he had described, he could not by any means agree with him, and the experience of the last ten years forbad any hope of such a league acting long and steadily in concert for such an object. Though such a concert, he would readily admit, was in the highest degree desirable — a concert not to be fettered or damped by little confined views, or by separate interests, but proceeding on fair, broad, and liberal grounds —yet he was not sanguine in his hope of witnessing it. He was aware that Russia was the power which it was most for the interest of this country to conciliate, with a view to avert the evils and to produce the good to which the hon. gentleman had alluded; and one of the reasons he had for acceding to the last peace was, that during peace there might be an opportunity of procuring some continental alliance, of which there could be no hope during war, and which would serve to fix a barrier to the career of aggrandizement to which the French government was manifestly disposed; but notwithstanding this wish, he never omitted any endeavour that could tend to preserve the peace inviolate: his en-

Digitized by Google

deavours with regard to an alliance were merely for a concert of a defensive nature, such as the hon. gentleman had referred to. However little might be the disposition of some parties to do justice to ministers, he hoped this at least, they would acknowledge that nothing was omitted to preserve that peace; and he saw no change in the state of things that could induce him at all to calculate upon the probability of its restoration from the adoption of the motion.—The hon. gentleman had stated the advantages to be derived from the mediation of Russia, not only with reference to the particular case of the points in dispute, but with a view to the establishment of a general guarantee for the protection of all the weaker states of Europe. With this opinion he most distinctly coincided. Of the importance of the mediation of Russia, no man, possessing enlarged views of national policy, could for a moment entertain a doubt. An allusion had been made to the system of naval neutrality which had been set up by the Northern powers. He had much satisfaction in stating to the House, that with the great majority of reflecting individuals in Russia, and particularly with the individuals composing the government, a more wise system of policy was now pursued. Views of an enlarged and comprehensive nature were indulged. It was allowed that the interests of this country and of Russia were in every point of view compatible: a decided opinion was formed, that no useful purpose could be promoted by pressing the neutral question. The fact was, indeed, that this question was brought forward under the reign of the late empress, in whose character the pride and the vanity of being at the head of a coalition, operated more powerfully than any considerations of real and permanent utility to her empire. It could not be forgotten that Russia possessed no mercantile marine, and that if the present relations of the Turkish empire continued, a mercantile marine never could, to any great extent, be formed. The only consequence of the establishment of the neutrality to be contended for, would therefore be to introduce into the Baltic, powers whose influence it was the obvious interest of Russia to counteract. He could not too strongly press on the House his conviction of the extreme importance of the co-operation of Russia in any plan to counteract the progress of French ambition; and any measure calculated to promote this object would meet with the warmest concurrence from ministers. His objection to the motion was, simply, that it had been supported on no parliamentary ground. It had not been proved that ministers had shewn any indisposition to accept of this mediation; and till this was proved, he must contend that the motion was unnecessary and inexpedient. In the conclusion of his majesty's declaration, on the contrary, a disposition to accept of any arrangement by which an amicable adjustment could be obtained, was clearly laid down; and after such a declaration, he could not see what beneficial consequence could arise from pressing the motion. On the other hand, it might have a very unfavourable effect on the state of the public mind; it might unhinge the exertions of the country, and lead to expectations which could not be realized. He would not say that the hope of mediation was altogether romantic, but he would contend that hopes ought not to be held out to the country which might be disappointed. To the principles of the hon. gentleman's speech he had no possible objection—they were principles in which all were agreed. As it now stood, however, the motion could be productive of no good, and might be attended with considerable evil. He should therefore, as the most convenient way of disposing of it, move the previous question.

Mr. *Pitt* said:—Sir; in the present important crisis of affairs, I am sure there must be a common wish and a general feeling that it is not desirable to press into view any differences, or to press the House to any division upon topics of minor importance. Whatever I may think of the hon. gentleman's proposal as a motion of advice in the actual circumstances, with all of the general principles of the speech on which it was grounded, I most heartily concur. I heard, indeed, the speech of the hon. gentleman with infinite satisfaction; and that satisfaction was heightened by observing, that my noble friend received the sentiments with that approbation which left no doubt on my mind, that, if any effect can be given to those principles, no favourable opportunity will be lost. It would be strange, however, if I had not heard with approbation the principles laid down by the hon. gentleman. They are the principles which, in the best times of this country, induced and enabled this House to contribute to the general liberty and independence of Europe; to

Digitized by Google

support the rights and redress the wrongs of minor powers, and to oppose a successful resistance to the encroachments of ambition. They are the principles which (more than any passionate and national opposition to France, proved, as France has been by so many facts, to be the rival and almost the national enemy of this country) led us not to consider the name of any particular state, or the prejudices of local situation, or the dictates of separate interest, but prompted us to set ourselves in opposition to any power, both as, in the first instance, it threatened the repose and the rights of other states; and, in the second, as it affected the independence and security of Great Britain. I rejoice to be able, on this occasion, to agree with the hon. gentleman in his general principles, though I cannot but remember there have been times when the hon. gentleman differed from me, on the application of those principles, with a vehemence that looked very like an entire condemnation of them. If, however, he does admit the principles, I rejoice, for the sake of the country, that he has stated them in a manner so clear, so just, and so satisfactory. They are the principles on which the greatness, the glory, and the prosperity of this nation have been reared; and never were they struggled for more gloriously than they were during the last war: and it was only when I saw myself compelled, by adverse circumstances, to despair of the effect of their application, that I looked to any separate arrangements for this country. They are the principles upon which I found myself justified in proposing to this House large subsidies to continental powers; they are the principles on which I have thought that it was justifiable to sacrifice our private and separate interests to procure greater advantages for our allies, and to promote and consolidate the security of the general system of Europe; they are the principles that supported me when I found myself obliged to differ from several friends, for whose talents and opinions I entertain the highest respect, about the manner in which the war was terminated. It was those principles which, after there was no longer any hope of improving the situation of the continent, and promoting the security of the general system of Europe, by any separate efforts of our own, led me to think, that in making terms for ourselves, we were more at liberty to yield considerable sacrifices, with a view to put an end to the evils of war, than we should have been had we sought peace by the desertion of our allies, and an abandonment of the cause of Europe.—But, far be it from me to enter upon those topics in order to call forth difference of opinion. I allude to them to show that the principles I now applaud are not new to me. My approbation of them is recorded in my past conduct. I am glad the hon. gentleman has proclaimed them with so much precision and force: I hope they will have the benefit of his great authority, and the recommendation of his great talents (and greater authority they cannot have), to remove objections which have sheltered themselves, perhaps more than there was ground for, under his name, against all common cause with the rest of Europe, and against sacrificing, in any circumstances, the least portion of British interests, for the balance and preservation of the continent. But, while I approve the principle of keeping a watchful eye upon the state of the continent, I do not mean that, upon every movement, we ought to interfere with continental affairs. All I say is, that no great convulsion, which shall unhinge the established interests, and dissolve former relations, can take place without involving consequences highly important to Great Britain. We are not bound, however, to take upon ourselves to interfere, even when interference would be desirable, unless we are joined by those whose co-operation would be necessary to give effect to that interference. But, whether for a season of war or of peace—whether in the view of giving energy to our arms, or security to our repose—whether with a view of preventing war by negotiation, or restoring peace after war has broken out, it is the duty of the ministers of this country to avail themselves of the good offices of powers with whom it must be the interest of this country to be united in alliance.—The hon. gentleman very properly avoided detailing any mode in which the principles he laid down might be applied to the mediation of Russia. Indeed, it is impossible to point out the mode of application, without knowing exactly the circumstances in which it would be exerted. I shall therefore, upon the whole, follow the hon. gentleman's example. It will appear whimsical, however, if I now seem to narrow the principle of continental policy, which the hon. gentleman has sanc-

Digitized by Google

tioned. This, nevertheless, I venture to state—that if there can arise out of the mediation of Russia, any chance of producing a general system on which peace could be restored, and confirmed by respectable guarantees—a peace by which not only the objects in dispute between Great Britain and France, but other points relative to the state of Europe, could be adjusted—it would be a consummation so important, that, to obtain it, some arrangement, even less advantageous to this country, in a separate view, would be admissible. What that arrangement should be, either as to the general system or our particular interest, it is impossible beforehand to determine: it will depend upon all the circumstances of the case. On the other hand, if that system were not attainable, our interest would prescribe other views and other precautions. Though unwilling to separate ourselves from the continent; though willing to make some deduction from the sum of our own demands, and from the means of separate security to augment the strength of the general system, it might happen that we should be left, without any fault of our own, to maintain a separate struggle. If we know that France entertains views of hostility towards us—if we know that we have in our hands strong and impregnable means of resistance—powerful and effectual means to defeat that hostility with which we have been particularly threatened—then would it be especially incumbent on us to provide, that any substitute for our security, which a general arrangement would afford, should be solid and efficient. If our security is to depend upon our own single efforts, and to be maintained by our own separate arrangements, we have in our power the means; nor shall we put to hazard by a feeble policy what British valour has gained. To consolidate our security by the general security of Europe, is undoubtedly desirable; as well as to provide for it by particular and separate arrangements. To unite both in their respective degrees, must be that which is most desirable; but how far each will be carried must be regulated by circumstances.—So much I thought it necessary to hint, that we may not be turned into the opposite extremes of, on the one hand, neglecting the state of the continent altogether, as conducive to our security; and, on the other, that we may not look to any continental arrangements with such confidence as to slacken our efforts, and to abandon our separate means of vindicating our rights, and preserving by war that security to which we are entitled; unless, like most of the states of the continent, we are ready to sink into subjection to the power of the aggressions and outrages of which we complain.—So much upon the general principles laid down by the hon. gentleman the justice of which I so strongly feel. Nevertheless, unless some practicable benefit is to be derived from pressing the motion, I hope the hon. gentleman will be inclined to withdraw it. To press it to a division at the present moment, would be attended with one of two inconveniences: either the previous question would be carried, by which there might be room for the misconstruction that one part of the House was hostile to the principles on which the hon. gentleman argued; or, on the other hand, if the motion were carried, it would imply a doubt that the House entertained a suspicion that ministers did not concur in the principles so well laid down in the hon. gentleman's speech, and were unwilling to give them effect; a suspicion for which, after what has been said by my noble friend, there appears no foundation.

Mr. *Fox* said, that his opposition to the late war, as far as the question of continental alliances was concerned, rested precisely on the same principles as those upon which he had that day grounded his motion. It was singular, that after the many occasions he had had to debate this subject, he should still be misunderstood. He had opposed the late war, among other reasons, from an opinion which he had formed, and stated at its very commencement, of its tendency to effect the total destruction of the influence of this country on the continent. Subsequent events had proved the correctness of that opinion. The right hon. gentleman himself had acknowledged that he had consented to make peace, as soon as he perceived that the prolongation of the war was not likely to procure any better security for the continent. Mr. Fox was against referring to any topics which might revive past animosities; but he begged to know in what consisted the difference between the right hon. gentleman and himself, except that he had foreseen some years earlier, what the right hon. gentleman had been obliged to admit some years later? It was on a simi-

Digitized by Google

lar principle that he had approved the peace—he had approved it, not as good in itself, but as preferable, under all the circumstances, to a continuance of the war. In answer to the application which had been addressed to him to withdraw his motion, Mr. Fox expressed his regret, that, as matters then stood, he could not comply with it. Further explanation was necessary from the noble secretary of state. Whether Russia had offered her mediation in the large, or in the limited sense of the word, it was important to have an assurance from ministers that they would accept it. No such assurance had been given, and with less he could not be content. If ministers, however, would state fairly that there existed among them, at that moment, a disposition to avail themselves of the offers of Russia, whatever those offers might be, or of a mediation when regularly proposed to them, he would make no difficulty of withdrawing his motion.

Lord Hawkesbury assured the House, that the British government was ready to accept the mediation of Russia; upon which, Mr. Fox consented to withdraw his motion.

Debate on Mr. Patten's Motion relative to the Conduct of Ministers.] June 3. Mr. *Patten* rose to make his long promised motion, and said :—Sir; a short time before the recess, I gave notice of a motion, the object of which was, an inquiry into the state of the nation. At that time I was convinced, from the conduct of ministers, in withholding all communication since the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens, to the period when his majesty's gracious message was delivered, that they had given strong grounds for an inquiry. I thought that parliament was entitled to every kind of communication which could be afforded, consistent with circumstances. It may be asked, why I undertook a task, to the execution of which I am incompetent? It was upon this ground, that gentlemen of great talents and rank have been accused of aiming, by their difference of sentiment from ministers, at places and emoluments; and in order to prevent an accusation of so unworthy a nature from being countenanced, I proposed the inquiry. I have nothing to hope or to fear from the event of my motion; I belong to no party, and cannot be accused of having for my object the gratification of personal or selfish feelings. Upon the subject of the attacks that have been made against the conduct of the first lord of the Admiralty, I have very little to offer. It has, indeed, been said, that fifty ships of the line would be ready for actual service in the course of a very short time. It has been the cause of considerable alarm to the country to hear that formidable naval armaments were carrying on in the ports of France; yet I have heard, that when lord Whitworth received his majesty's message to parliament, communicating that intelligence, he did not know of any such armaments. That this was the fact, is confirmed by the statement of the first consul, and by the positive assurances of M. Talleyrand. An officer of eminence in France also declared that the naval force preparing in the ports of the republic, was not sufficient for the exigencies of the colonial service.—I now come to the documents upon your table. Every man must be satisfied that the first consul ultimately aimed a fatal blow at our power and independence: but although this is a position which cannot be controverted, it does not go to extenuate the measures pursued by his majesty's ministers; who have been kept in a continual state of aggression, insult, and degradation, by the first consul. I contend, that the first aggression ought not to have been suffered; and that such an opportunity to contest the pretensions of France, and to enforce our own just claims, ought not to have been passed by. Whereas, they have suffered patiently a long series of aggression, injuries, and degradations. It is to so unaccountable a line of conduct, that I this day object. Have they, or have they not, complained of the unjust views, the unbounded ambition, the extravagant spirit of aggrandizement and encroachment manifested by the government of France? We know from their own ambition, that they have not done so when they ought to have been most active in their remonstrances and complaints. But at the same time I readily grant, that all these injuries and causes of complaint, when taken in the aggregate, form an irresistible ground for the vigorous prosecution of hostilities. We have indeed something like a new proof of the hostile views of the French government, in the appointment of commercial commissioners; but in that case I most decidedly contend, that no remonstrance on our part was necessary. A remonstrance was, on the contrary, a

Digitized by Google

proof of our weakness and fears. Ministers ought to have sent them away at once, and followed it up by a demand of satisfaction. In adverting to the melancholy situation of Switzerland and Holland, I cannot be ignorant that they have contended for their independence and liberties, and cannot but lament that their struggle has proved ineffectual. They have even less to hope for than the most servile province dependent upon France. France can never forgive the boldness, and the desire to rescue themselves from the yoke, manifested by Switzerland and Holland. In the feelings and wrongs of those countries we are deeply implicated, because we have the same tyranny to oppose which enslaved them. At the time when orders were issued for the surrender of the Cape of Good Hope, were not ministers as fully acquainted with every act of aggression as they are now, with the single exception of Sebastiani's mission to Egypt? There are many other strong grounds, on the justice of which I could rest my charges against ministers; but I shall content myself with accusing them of withholding all communication from parliament; of suspending the functions of this House; of having issued such orders as they were not warranted to do from their own knowledge and conviction; of compromising the honour and dignity of his majesty's crown; and of essentially injuring the interests of his people. I beg, Sir, I may be clearly understood when I state, that at this moment gentlemen are called upon to direct their attention solely to external objects; that this is not a time for them to enter into disputes and contests with respect to internal regulations; and that questions of a more important nature, involving as they do the very existence of the country, demand their consideration and decision. We are now in a crisis which calls for all the talent, all the mental ability the country can afford; and as we require of the people every aid which their resources can supply, we should, in our turn contribute to their security, by the exertion and combination of those mental powers which are best calculated to promote their dearest interests. I shall now read the resolutions which I intend to submit to the consideration of the House:—1. "That it appears to this House, from the declaration issued by his majesty on the 18th day of May last, and laid before this House by his majesty's command, that the conduct of the French republic, during the whole period which has elapsed since the conclusion of the definitive treaty of peace, is considered by his majesty's ministers as having been altogether inconsistent with every principle of good faith, moderation, and justice; as having exhibited one continued series of aggression, violence, and insult; and as necessarily creating a thorough conviction of a system deliberately adopted by France for the purpose of degrading, villifying, and insulting his majesty and his government.—2. That his majesty's ministers having, throughout the whole period, from the conclusion of the definitive treaty of peace, to the issuing of his majesty's declaration of the 18th day of May last, neither communicated to parliament any knowledge of the sense which they now appear to have entertained respecting the conduct and system of France, nor any regular information of the particulars on which the same was founded, or of the steps taken by his majesty's government thereupon, have thereby withheld from this House the necessary materials for a due and full discharge of its constitutional functions; and that, by encouraging throughout the country an unfounded security and confidence in the permanence of peace, they have embarrassed and perplexed our commerce, have deceived the expectations, and unnecessarily harassed the spirit of the people, and have materially increased and aggravated the difficulties of our actual situation.—3. That it was the duty of his majesty's ministers to make timely and adequate representations against such acts, as have, in their judgment, constituted a series of aggression, violence, and insult, on the part of France: that, by dignified and temperate remonstrances, followed up with consistency, and sustained with firmness, either the course and progress of such acts would have been arrested, without the necessity of recurring to arms, or the determination of the French government to persist therein would have been distinctly ascertained, before his majesty had, by the reduction of his forces, and the surrender of his conquests put out of his hands the most effectual means of obtaining redress and reparation: that this essential duty appears to have been, in a very great degree, neglected by his majesty's ministers; and that such their neglect and omission have been highly injurious to the public interest.—4. That it appears

Digitized by Google

to this House, that on the 17th of October last, counter orders were dispatched by his majesty's government, revoking the orders before given for the surrender of the Cape of Good Hope, and of the other conquests then held by his majesty; and that the final order, by virtue of which his majesty's forces actually evacuated the Cape, was sent on the 16th of November. That on the said 16th of November, the hostile spirit of France had (in the judgment of his majesty's ministers, as now avowed by them) already been manifested, for more than six months, by one continued series of aggression, violence and insult, for which neither reparation nor redress had, down to that moment, been obtained: that the offensive principle had already been distinctly advanced, of excluding his majesty from all concern in the affairs of the continent; that the Spanish and other priories had already been withdrawn from the order of Malta; Piedmont, Parma, Placentia, and Elba, had been annexed to France; Switzerland had been attacked and subjugated, and the remonstrance of his majesty's government upon that subject had been treated with indignity and contempt; the territory of the Batavian republic was at that very moment still occupied by the armies of the chief consul of France, and its internal administration still controlled by his interference; and the French government was then actually engaged in the pursuit of those plans and measures for the subversion of the Turkish empire, to which his majesty's declaration refers, as a violation of the treaty of peace: that in directing, under such circumstances, the final surrender of the Cape, without having previously explained or arranged the numerous points of difference and complaint which then actually subsisted between the two governments, his majesty's ministers acted in contradiction to the sense which they had themselves manifested of their own duty, and have improvidently exposed to danger some of the most important interests of his majesty's dominions. 5. That by all these instances of misconduct in the present ministers of his majesty's government, they have proved themselves unworthy of the confidence reposed in them, in such an important crisis as the present."

The first resolution being put,

Colonel *Bastard* thought that if the state of the nation was fairly laid before parliament, it would be the best justification of the conduct of ministers. The situation of the country was one of great anxiety; but was it to be attributed to the late or present administration? The present administration had come into power at a most critical period, and had acted under difficulties unparalleled. They found the whole chain of connexion with which this country had acted, broken, and the country discontented in a very high degree; the circumstances in which they were placed compelled the treaty of Amiens, and made it prudent not to push every point of aggression. When he heard two opposite parties, the one accusing ministers of being too rash, and the other of being too timid, he concluded that ministers had acted just as they ought to have done. It required more fortitude to bear an insult than to resent one. A man worn out ought not to attempt to combat with another in full health and vigour; and we required time to renew our strength.

Mr. *I. H. Browne* did not think it right at this critical moment, when all agreed in the propriety of supporting the country against the dangers which threatened it, to interrupt the unanimity of the House by any vote of censure on his majesty's government. With respect to the discussions with France, he thought they were better terminated by the cabinet, than by making partial communications to parliament. The true spirit of the treaty of Amiens had been violated before ministers had made the communication to the House. If they were to blame, they had erred on the right side; for he conceived it better that an alarm should be given soon, than for the nation to be lulled in perfect security in the moment of danger.

Lord *Kensington* could not agree that the conduct of his majesty's late ministers had placed the country in its present state. Their administration had been high and honourable, and at the very conclusion was glorious to the British name. The conduct of the present ministers had been deceitful, and unwise, and submissive. The treaty of Amiens was discussed on the 14th of May; after that, the sequestration of the property belonging to the Spanish langue, the annexation of the island of Elba, &c. took place; but all prior to the 23rd of November, the day on which the chancellor of the exchequer assured that House, there was no proba-

Digitized by Google

bility of the treaty being broken. The views of France were obvious to the whole world, and every one was acquainted with the insults she had heaped upon us, and yet ministers took no measures to counteract her designs.

Earl *Temple* said:—With regard to the first resolution, little remains to be said. His majesty's declaration speaks for itself, and is to be considered as the language of his ministers. They observe, "that the system of aggression, violence, and aggrandizement, which characterize the different governments of France, during the war, has been continued, with as little disguise, since its termination." At length, then, we have a bold avowal of the opinion of ministers respecting the conduct of the French government, during the peace. How they can justify this tardy avowal remains to be explained. A reference to their parliamentary conduct ever since the treaty of Amiens, will show, that instead of putting us upon our guard against dangers they knew existed, they have universally tried to lull the country into a security, which they now tell us was not warranted by the fact, and inspire us with hopes, which they now declare, they knew to be fallacious. November 23rd, 1802 the chancellor of the exchequer declared, "that there was nothing that indicated the renewal of hostilities with France." Look to the events of that period, as collected in the papers upon your table, and then say whether ministers were justified in what they asserted. At that very moment, there is scarce a circumstance which is now declared to be a cause of war, which did not exist in its full force. With the exception of one only, every instance of aggression, complained of as being committed by France against the commerce of this country, had occurred long before the 23rd November. The declaration very justly states, that the treaty of Amiens, was founded on the assumption of the state of possession, and engagements actually subsisting at the moment of the signature of the treaty. The practice of ministers forms a singular contrast with their theory. On that very principle, they knew that the articles respecting Malta could not be executed. The revenues of that order, the independence of which, it was the professed object of the treaty to secure; and on the existence of which revenues, that independence existed; were known to be confiscated, before the conclusion of the peace, or immediately after. In the Madrid Gazette, of the 27th April, 1802, it is stated, that the king of Spain had annexed to the royal domain the langues and possessions of the order of Malta, within his dominions; and yet, with this fact known, we see ministers, from the May following, down to the breaking off the negotiation, pestering every power on the continent with applications to guarantee the execution of an article, which they knew could not be executed. As to Switzerland, the ambitious projects of France were well known before November; nay, at the very time ministers were assuring the country, that they saw no prospect whatever of a renewal of hostilities, Mr. Moore was engaged at Constance in negotiations, which, if the situation of Europe had allowed of their being carried to the extent his instructions authorized, must have ended in a renewal of hostilities, prior to the time to which I have so often alluded; and every complaint which we now urge as a cause of war against France, for its insolent and hostile interference in the administration of our laws, and its audacious attack on the liberty of our press, existed in its full force. On the 7th of August M. Otto writes that insulting letter to lord Hawkesbury, in which, in the name of the first consul, he insists upon a stop being put to publications hostile to France; the removal of the emigrant noblesse and clergy out of the country; and the deportation of other emigrants to Canada. All this, and much more on the same subject, happened long before the 23rd of November. In August it was, that captain D'Auvergne was seized contrary to every principle of justice, and in violation of the treaty of Amiens. Long before November, it was well known, that France did not mean to indemnify the stadtholder, according to the spirit of the treaty of Amiens. In short, almost every insult of which we so justly complain had occurred before the 23rd of November; and yet, on that day, the minister comes down to this House, and states, "that he sees no prospect of a renewal of hostilities!" We are now confirmed in our researches, to this period; for the same declaration, more strongly marked, was made on the 23rd of February following, in the reason assigned for increasing the establishment of his royal highness the Prince of Wales, which

Digitized by Google

was, that it was a moment of "profound peace." Dates and facts are the witnesses I call to the veracity of the king's ministers. On the 9th of February lord Hawkesbury directs lord Whitworth to remonstrate against the publication of Sebastiani's report. On the 17th that remonstrance is made. On the 21st of February lord Whitworth had the famous audience of Buonaparté, which ministers declare was a decisive proof of the hostile views of the first consul; the measure of the insult was full; aggressions had followed aggressions; the views of France upon Egypt, upon the Turkish empire, upon Switzerland, upon Holland, and upon this country, were known and avowed. Every feeling which animates us as Englishmen, had been insulted; we were told by our insolent enemy, "Your press must be made subservient to my views, you must transport the nobles and the priesthood who have sought refuge in your hospitality; you must import commercial agents; you must stand aloof whilst I seize, with a giant's grasp, the whole of Europe; you must give up all connexion with the continent; the treaty of Amiens provides for every thing, and settles every thing." On the 23rd of February we had been told all this; on the 23rd of February the minister comes here and tells us that we are in "profound peace;" and on the 8th of March, the same minister comes and tells us to prepare for war!—We are prepared for war. I trust there is not a man whose breast does not glow with indignation, at the insults we have suffered, and with a determination to support the honour, and avenge the injured cause of his country. Ministers lulled the country into an unreal belief of security; they cherished her by false hopes; they asked unlimited confidence, and have reposed none in return; they deluded the people with glittering visions of peace, knowing that when they awoke, they would awake to the reality of a war.—The next point is, have ministers done all that it became them to do, to avert the calamity which has come upon us? Now, whether they have submitted enough, God knows the country has seen enough of submission! It is not therefore whether they have sufficiently given way to the views of France. The question is, whether they remonstrated in such a manner as became the ministers of a great and powerful nation; whether they interfered in such a manner as to make their interference effective; whether they mediated in such a manner as to aid those in whose favour they mediated; whether they repelled aggressions with firmness, and opposed dignified moderation to violent and presuming demands? I do not hesitate to say, that in all these points they have completely failed: when they have conceded most, they have conceded with least dignity; when they resisted most, they resisted with least effect. They have urged in their declaration, as one of these causes, which in the aggregate, made the great cause of the war, that France has enforced ever since the peace, with inexcusable severity, the prohibitions which had been placed upon the subjects of his majesty; that violence has been offered to their vessels and their property. How stands the fact? In the first collection of papers not one word is mentioned of what constitutes this part of their declaration; in one solitary instance only, is the subject alluded to.—In the 2nd collection of papers, we see notification after notification from Mr. Merry, of insult upon insult offered to our flags and commerce, but in no one instance does any remonstrance appear from his majesty's government; no instruction to Mr. Merry to remonstrate; and in the case of the ship George, no answer of any kind appears to have been given to Mr. Merry. The second cause of war is, the introduction by France, into this country, of her privileged spies, the commercial agents. To this insulting act of aggression, no remonstrance is made by ministers, and, except in the one case, no steps appear to have been taken for sending them out of the country. Once, indeed, lord Hawkesbury informed the French minister, that the agents would not be acknowledged as such, and that if any attempts were made to send them to their place of destination, they would receive orders to quit the country. In London, however, the whole *corps d'espionage* were permitted to remain unmolested.—The next cause of war is, the occupation of Holland by the French troops. To this breach of the letter of three solemn treaties, not only no remonstrance appears to have been made, but we have the assurance of the noble secretary of state, that no written remonstrance was made by the ministers; and though, in consequence of Mr. Liston's dispatch of the 13th of October, orders were sent out on the 17th to retain the Cape and the West India islands, on the

Digitized by Google

receipt of his dispatch of the 29th, stating the seizure by the French troops of the frontier towns of Holland, orders are sent out on the 16th of November to evacuate the Cape and the West India islands, which we had before ordered to be retained, notwithstanding the cause of that order remained the same.—The fourth cause of war is the seizure of Switzerland by France. I will not inquire, whether it was fitting that this country should have interfered in its fate. We have interfered; but was that interference made in the manner most likely to answer the purpose for which it was intended? As early as the 13th of July 1802, the deputies of almost all the Swiss cantons remonstrated publicly against the constitution forced upon them by Buonaparté. From that time it was evident, that the Swiss only waited for the moment most propitious to make another struggle for their liberties. France saw the blow that was impending, and during the whole summer made preparations for maintaining the seizure of Switzerland. At length, on the 21st of September, the flame burst forth; all Switzerland appeared in arms against her task-masters. During this interval, did this country stir one step to aid the rising spirit of the Swiss, or assist their daring efforts? Of our interference, we hear nothing till the 3rd of October. On that day, Mr. Merry writes word, that the Swiss had an agent in Paris, who was directed to apply to the foreign ministers there, to interfere with the first consul in their favour. After having in vain tried to interest the feelings of all Europe in his behalf; on England he places his last, his firm reliance; to England his country looks for protection and assistance. Mr. Merry writes for instructions; he receives none; no answer is ever given to the Swiss agent, and he is left to cool his heels in the anti-chamber of Mr. Merry. In this instance, however, an English minister ventures to make a written remonstrance, and no answer is given to it. On the 10th of October the remonstrance is sent to M. Otto; but it appears that no answer was made to it. Rumour indeed, says, that one was made, but in such offensive terms, so broadly declaring that we had no right to interfere in the affairs of the continent, and referring us with such insolent pedantry to the treaty of Amiens, as to the book in which alone we were to read our destinies; that it would have justified immediate war, instead of being followed by the pusillanimous surrender of the Cape and our West India conquests.—The next cause of war is the non-execution on the part of France, of that part of the treaty of Amiens, respecting Malta; and upon this point the negotiation appears to have been conducted with the same firmness and dignity which so strongly characterised its whole course. In May, the Spanish revenues of the order were confiscated. In October, by the annexation of Parma more were confiscated; still the literal execution of the 10th article is insisted upon by England. During the whole time no new arrangement is heard of. The 10th article is constantly rung in our ears, the whole 10th article, nothing but the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens, till at last the farce can be carried on no longer, and the necessity of a new arrangement begins to be talked of. How is that negotiation supported by our ministers? On the 21st of July, Buonaparté tells lord Whitworth, that on Malta depends the question of peace or war, that on no terms shall England be permitted to retain Malta; that he had rather she should have the Fauxbourg St. Antoine than Malta. On the 11th of March, Talleyrand tells lord Whitworth that the first consul will look upon the non-evacuation of Malta, as the commencement of hostilities; not as a cause of war, but as an act of war. Here all discussion about Malta should have ended. Lord Whitworth had said, the occupation of Malta by England, in some shape or other, was necessary; and Talleyrand had said such occupation would be deemed the commencement of hostilities. Ultimatum is sent after ultimatum; and at last you give up the idea of retaining Malta for ever, on the dignified and honourable condition, that France agreed to your reserving it for ten years only, and secured your possession in full sovereignty of the island of Lampedosa. Your last ultimatum proposed, that in consideration of the immense accessions of strength obtained by France upon the continent, she should give up Malta for ten years, and steal Lampedosa for you for ever! You therefore gravely state, that at the end of ten years, the vast accession of force to France, confirmed by ten years possession; the immense increase of her resources, ripened to ten years maturity; her possession of Italy, her influence in Germany, in Spain, and in Portugal, and her command of Holland,

Digitized by Google

will be counterbalanced by the enormous acquisition of a barren rock, of an island without an inhabitant, of that nursery of gulls, Lampedosa!—The next cause of war is the attack upon the liberty of the press, and the requisition to transport the emigrants to Canada or elsewhere. I call upon ministers to point out to me, in any part of the correspondence, one remonstrance against the insolent attack upon the liberty of the press. Lord Hawkesbury writes very prettily on the subject, and lord Whitworth assures M. Talleyrand that it is impossible for lord Hawkesbury to control the licence of the press here, because he could not influence a single newspaper for his own objects. He trusts, therefore, that the first consul will not be so unreasonable as to insist upon his controlling the language of the newswriters and pamphleteers in this country. But have we one word of remonstrance against the insolent language, or the insulting tone of the French government? No; in proportion as France increased in insolence, we multiplied concession. When we look to the subject relating to the French emigrants, disgraceful indeed is the tale we have to tell. The first attack made by the French government is a remonstrance from Talleyrand to Mr. Merry, against the conduct of the French princes, in publicly wearing the insignia of their orders, which Talleyrand describes as insulting to his government. The tame and disgraceful answer which ministers make to this childish and impertinent complaint is, that "it would be more proper if they (the French princes and nobles) abstained from it. But how could ministers prevent it?" Was that the language for his majesty's ministers to hold in reply to such a remonstrance? I ask them, if ever the chastising hand of Providence were to plunge this country into the same misfortunes which have overwhelmed France, if ever our nobles were sent to seek refuge in a foreign land, how they would brook the idea of our nobility surrendering the badges of their rank, and the insignia of their honours, because they no longer dared to wear them? Yet this is the conduct which ministers think it would have been more proper if the French nobles had followed. —The next demand the French government makes, is, that the French superior clergy and noblesse who were emigrants in England, should be removed from the kingdom, to Canada! These august, these venerable characters, who, true to their religion, and faithful to their sovereign, gave up even the means of subsistence, and left their friends, relatives, and dearest connexions, rather than remain in the land where that sovereign had been murdered, and that religion prophaned; who, encouraged by the general voice of England, sought that refuge here, which almost every other country refused them. We are called upon by the authors of their miseries, who are at this moment, revelling in their spoils, and exulting in their misfortunes, to remove them from the refuge we gave them, and thus to violate that hospitality, on the faith of which they came. Those gallant men, who so sacrificing every consideration of personal risk, made an unavailing, but glorious attempt, to restore the throne of their kings, and to establish the altars of their faith, whose exertions we animated, and whose arms we assisted; who engaged in this memorable struggle on the faith of British promises, and in the confidence of British assistance; we are called upon by the very men against whom they fought, and against whom we once made common cause with them, to 'deporter' to Canada. Let gentlemen recollect the meaning attached to that word by the present rulers of France, let them recollect the horrors of the former deportation to Cayenne, as described by the miserable survivors of it; let them recollect, that to a deportation of this kind, the French government wished to doom the loyal and persecuted emigrants of France, and then let them turn to the answer which his majesty's ministers chose to give to this cruel, this infernal proposal: 'His majesty is very desirous to obviate any cause of complaint or uneasiness with respect to their persons, and measures are in contemplation, and will be taken, for the purpose of removing them out of his majesty's European dominions." I shut the book in disgust, in horror, and in shame. In disgust and in horror at the barbarity which could dictate this sentence, and in shame and in confusion at the eternal stain which it will fix upon this page of our history.—I have thus gone through the different points which appear to me to bear upon the subject before you, and to justify the resolutions which are submitted to the House. From these extracts, which I have made from the papers on your table, from the facts which they avow, and from the dates which confirm

Digitized by Google

these facts, three deductions are to be made. The first is, that from the moment the treaty of Amiens was signed, ministers were aware of the hostility avowed and expressed by the government of France towards this country; secondly, that being so aware of them, they concealed that conviction from the country, and encouraged the people with hopes of permanent peace and tranquillity, knowing at the moment they held out these hopes, that they were false and illusory; and thirdly, that on many points, which they now make, either distinctively or collectively, causes of war, they made no remonstrance, or such remonstrances only, as were degrading to the dignity of the nation; and that when they interfered or mediated, they interfered without firmness, they mediated without honour.

Mr. *Hobhouse*, in answer to the charge that ministers had not made such communications to the House as the state of public affairs required, declared that, in his judgment they ought not to have laid the case before parliament at an earlier moment. Having concluded a peace, they were anxious to preserve it; and though they might see many instances of conduct in the French government which they deplored, yet these did not appear to their minds a sufficient ground of war; but when they found such an act as to authorize hostilities, then they came forward to the public. Had they come down to parliament, day after day, and communicated every circumstance of dispute and discussion, the consequence would have been to excite irritation between the two countries, and to propel those very hostilities which it was the object of negotiation to avert. The second charge against ministers, was no better founded than the first. Where was the proof that they had deceived parliament by illusory hopes of peace? He was present in the House on the 23rd of November, and was confident that the chancellor of the exchequer had not said on that day, that the country was likely to continue at peace. Did not the speech on the 23rd of November last avow, that "his majesty could not be indifferent to events passing on the continent, and that he should watch with jealousy the conduct of other powers." Was it probable that a minister who had abstained from the use of pacific language, in drawing up his majesty's speech, should in discussing the answer to the same speech, adopt language of a contrary tendency? As to the third charge of pusillanimity, in quietly submitting to various indignities from the French government. No man more valued the liberty of the press than himself; but, what more could ministers do than they had done? Buonaparté insisted that no animadversions upon the proceedings of the French government should be published, or even commented upon, by the members of the two Houses of Parliament. The demand was rejected. If this were a cause for affront, it was for France to show its resentment. Was this country, which sustained no injury, which uninterruptedly pursued its own course, to re-plunge itself into the calamities of war? With respect to the application of the first consul, for the removal of the French princes from the British dominions, ministers refused to violate the laws of hospitality, by complying with the insolent proposal. What more effectual measure could be adopted? If this were to be a cause of war, it should have been taken up by France, not by this country. But the noble lord had said, that ministers had assured the French government they would take into their contemplation the removal of French persons from this country; and this he considered as the very *acmè* of national disgrace: but whom did they contemplate to remove? —not the French princes, but persons who, protected and treated hospitably by this country, should publish libels upon other governments, with whom we are at peace, and should engage in plots tending to destroy the harmony between this nation and France. But when ground for war did really occur in the conduct of France, when the report of Sebastiani manifested the ambitious designs of Buonaparté against Egypt, was any want of energy discoverable in ministers? Far from it. They refused to evacuate Malta until France had afforded additional means of security against her vast projects of aggrandizement. This refusal Buonaparté declared to be "a commencement of hostilities." Thus France had given the challenge, and the chancellor of the exchequer had, with proper spirit, accepted it. He had no doubt that ministers, whose justice and moderation had so eminently marked their earnestness to preserve peace, would evince their ability to conduct war with honour and advantage to the nation, and gain a fresh title to the public confidence.

Sir *W. Young* expressed his doubts

Digitized by Google

whether ministers had shown sufficient firmness and resolution. France had discovered a continued system of depressing the British commerce in every part of their empire. This had particularly shown itself since the treaty of Amiens. But he did not think ministers had taken sufficient energetic steps to counteract the French system. With respect to Malta, he trusted it would never be made a subject of debate in any future treaty. This country should look on France as a great military republic, and Buonaparté as a great military and aspiring genius. We should prepare for a most arduous contest, and that not merely during his life; for whoever might succeed him in military power, would make it necessary that similar strenuous exertions should be made by this country.

Mr. *Fonblanque* could not agree to the resolutions moved against ministers, notwithstanding he might differ with them on particular points. He thought the war was entered on for the support of British independence; and though ministers might have acted remissly on particular points, yet, on the whole, they had shown an unalterable spirit of firmness and perseverance. The resolutions were at variance with facts; and he thought the grounds advanced were not sufficient to withdraw the confidence of the House from ministers.

Mr. *Williams Wynn* confirmed lord Temple's statement of the chancellor of the exchequer's declaration, "that the country was in a state of profound peace." He congratulated the House that the treaty of Amiens was no longer asserted to be "a treaty as likely to last as any which had been concluded during the last hundred years;" a treaty, "the time, tone, terms, and temper of which held out the best promise of security," but that it was now described by ministers themselves, as "a peace of experiment," (an experiment upon the strength, the wealth and existence of the country), which was called for by the clamours of the people. This he positively denied. At no time, during the course of a nine years war, had the people been less clamorous for peace than at the time of the signature of the preliminaries. Not a single petition against the prosecution of the war, had been presented, not even a single meeting had been called to consider of such a petition. A gallant colonel had praised the moderation of the conduct of ministers in the late discussions, and had asserted, "that there was more true fortitude in submitting to injuries than in resenting them." Of this species of fortitude ministers certainly possessed a most eminent degree. After some of the most insulting acts of aggression which the enemy could offer, they had contented themselves with presenting memorial after memorial, which might, indeed, in the language of an honourable member, be denominated a series of "polite suggestions," to moulder unnoticed in M. Talleyrand's bureau. Of the propriety of submitting to insults in order to preserve peace, he very much doubted; first, because desirable as peace was, it would be too dearly purchased at such a price; secondly, because peace never could be preserved by such a line of conduct. A nation, or an individual, who tamely submitted to an insult, invited a repetition of it. If such was the case, with respect to our conduct towards regular governments, how much more was it when applied to an usurpation, such as we now saw in France, with such a ruler at the head of it, swollen with successful rapine, and elevated by a series of good fortune into the belief that nothing can withstand him. To such a person, more than any other, would a wise minister have thought it necessary to oppose a prompt and strong barrier, and to have adopted, upon the very first inspection of the treaty, a firm, manly, and unyielding tone of remonstrance, accompanied with a peremptory demand of satisfaction. By an opposite line of conduct, by encouraging him in the belief that we would make any sacrifices for the preservation of peace, ministers had in fact invited from a person, already but too willing, insult after insult, and aggression after aggression, until it was too late for him to draw back, and till their over anxious desire of peace had defeated its own object. He concluded with reprobating the unconstitutional system of concealment and deceit which had been adopted towards parliament since the opening of the session.

Mr. *T. Grenville* said, he would not pretend to deny that the object of the resolutions was to call in question the conduct of ministers throughout the whole of the discussions between the two governments, from the time that the definitive treaty of peace was concluded. To have a full and fair view of this subject it would, however, be necessary, briefly to

Digitized by Google

advert to the situation of the country at the time when the treaty was concluded. By the second of the resolutions it was declared, that ministers had not made to parliament such ample communications as could lead to any estimate of the real situation of the country, and therefore the House was debarred the constitutional right of giving any opinion on the state of public affairs. A disposition had been manifested to lay a great deal of stress on particular expressions. He was not disposed to question the words which gentlemen themselves were disinclined to disavow, but he would contend that it was perfectly parliamentary to draw an inference from the general spirit and complexion of the language employed by those in official situations, which gave to that language a degree of weight and consequence which it did not otherwise possess; which was the foundation of important conclusions, and which was consequently in all cases more narrowly canvassed. He was desirous, therefore, of distinctly stating to the House the views and expectations which had been held out at the time of the signature of the definitive treaty. When the merits of the definitive treaty were discussed, the chancellor of the exchequer had said, "that the peace would, in all probability, be of as long duration as any of the pacifications concluded during the last century." No information of any kind was communicated to the last parliament after the signature of the treaty, except through his majesty's speech at the conclusion of the session. In that speech an expectation was certainly held out that there was a prospect of the continuance of peace, and a recommendation was given to cultivate the advantage which a state of peace presented. In this state the matter continued till the opening of the new parliament on the 23rd of November, and then, as before, all communication was withheld, Here, however, it became necessary to direct the attention of the House to a few of the principal grounds of complaint which the Declaration contained. The first to which he would advert, was the complaints of the molestation to which our commerce was exposed. From documents on the table, it appeared, that from Dec. 1801, to Dec. 1802, a series of these complaints had been preferred to ministers, and no spirited remonstrance had taken place on the subject. The visit of the military consuls was known before his majesty's speech was delivered. That the designs of the first consul with respect to Switzerland were known, was a matter of notoriety. Ministers themselves had presented a remonstrance long before that period. With the annexation of Piedmont to France, ministers were not unacquainted. The confiscation of the revenue of the Spanish priories of the order of Malta, ministers were also acquainted with. The mission of Sebastiani, ministers were fully apprized of. The point to which he should next allude, was the arrangement of the German indemnities, which, to a considerable degree, involved British interests. He alluded to the insult which had been offered to his majesty, by mulcting a part of his Hanoverian dominions to satisfy the avarice of the greater powers. Complete mystery had covered the indemnities to the House of Orange. For this arrangement an article had been introduced into the treaty; but till the papers were laid on the table the House had been totally ignorant in what train the negotiation on this subject had been left by ministers. The whole business about the order for the evacuation of the Cape, and its subsequent retention, was entirely passed over in silence. By papers subsequently called for, it appeared, that on the 16th Oct. ministers had dispatched orders to retain the Cape, though, by a solemn treaty, it was to be given up within a limited period. At what time was this extraordinary step taken by ministers? It was just about one month from the time that parliament assembled! Did ministers, when parliament assembled, inform the House of the extraordinary measure to which they had resorted? They had not said a single word on the subject. In a very few weeks after it had appeared proper to them to evacuate the Cape, and then a war virtually intervened, still ministers continued to observe the same silence. Some hon. members had commended ministers for the silence they had so long observed. He could not accede to this doctrine. The system pursued by ministers would, under the cloak of responsibility, destroy every constitutional principle of parliamentary right, of discussion and inquiry. He sincerely believed, for himself, that if the negotiation, which had lately terminated, had taken a favourable turn, we should have heard nothing of the whole of the orders and counter orders of ministers. From the two first resolutions, the third appear-

Digitized by Google

ed to flow as a necessary inference. It involved a variety of serious and weighty observations. First, in the attacks which had been made on our ships by the officers of the French government. One hon. gentleman seemed to consider, that on this point there was no reasonable ground of complaint. If injuries had been received, British subjects had only to appeal to the national courts of justice. But, what were these national courts of justice? The principal ground of complaint was, that these courts of appeal decide only by taking immediate possession of the prizes submitted to their decision. But what does the first consul say to the complaints of British subjects? Why, he tells them they must appeal to the very tribunals from which all the injustice complained of had been received. In failing to remonstrate against a species of aggression, so contrary to every principle of intercourse between civilized nations, ministers had incurred a very grave responsibility. The mission of the French military consul did not appear to him to be described in his majesty's declaration, in terms at all correspondent to the nature of the insult. It was an outrage in all respects so gross, that ministers ought with much greater spirit to have resented the attempt to violate the usages of independent nations. If the French government had refused to give satisfaction, there could be no doubt that war, to avenge this national insult, would have been justifiable. Ministers had chosen to pursue a course totally different. No memorial could be laid before the House, not because they had not remonstrated, but because the remonstrance had taken place merely in a verbal conference with the French ambassador. The next point on which he wished to touch, was the situation of Holland. For his own part, he considered the conduct of the French government to the Batavian republic, to be a full, fair, and unanswerable ground of war. What he had to complain of in the conduct of ministers was, that they had not shown that zeal and activity with regard to the necessity of remonstrating against the violence and injustice of the French government to the Dutch, which their duty impetiously called on them to display. It was, to his infinite astonishment, that he found that no memorial had been presented to the French government on the subject; not that no memorial or remonstrance had been drawn up with the view of being presented not that it had been transmitted to Paris, with the view of being laid before the first consul; but that, after being in the hands of our ambassador, ministers had at length discovered that it would be more wise, prudent, and proper, that it should not be delivered. And they declined interfering, on the dishonourable principle, that their interference might have excited the jealousy of the French government. Now, as to their conduct to Switzerland, here too ministers seemed to be highly reprehensible. He had good reason for believing, that as early as the spring of last year, several persons of eminent character, and invested with considerable situations, had come from Switzerland to London, with a view of consulting about the best means of providing against that interference of the French government in their internal affairs they had even then begun to dread. He had heard that, so far from being received with kindness, it was not till after a solicitation of near two months that those individuals could gain admission to ministers; who consequently must have known, long before October, when their remonstrance in behalf of Switzerland was presented, what was the real situation of that country. But, there was another circumstance attending this remonstrance to which he wished to call the attention of the House. The memorial had been presented to the French government on the 10th of October, and nothing more is heard of it till the 27th of February, when lord Whitworth is instructed to demand an answer to the remonstrance. Was no inquiry made during the intermediate space, in what light the memorial was regarded by the French government? Ministers on every consideration of wisdom and policy, ought much earlier to have demanded explanation. As to Piedmont, he had to offer a few observations. On a former occasion the situation of the king of Sardinia had given rise to a good deal of discussion. On the debates upon the definitive treaty, when it was objected that no provision was obtained for that sovereign, a noble secretary of state had said, that he had not only lost all right to interference on his behalf on the part of this country, but had, from his conduct, placed himself in the situation of being considered as an enemy. Against such a view of the subject he did protest at the time. Because a prince, who

Digitized by Google

fighting in our cause, had been stripped of his dominions, was for a while obliged to assume the nominal appearance of a foe, he could never admit the doctrines which the noble lord had laid down. But on a sudden a most important change is introduced in the situation of this sovereign. From being something little short of an avowed enemy, he is at once converted into a favoured ally, for whom ample security is to be obtained for all his losses. And how is this new indemnity to be procured? Why, by the rare scheme of the cession of Lampedosa, and by tacking the poor king of Sardinia to the end of the projet, which contains two articles which may be either admitted or not, as the French minister for foreign affairs chooses to receive them. Whether, however, the menace of war or the proffer of peace was considered, the whole conduct of ministers to that unfortunate prince appeared equally disgusting. Now, as to Malta. He could not but think that a total want of policy with regard to Russia had been discovered by ministers while negotiations were going forward on this subject. Russia is allowed on all hands to have been the principal power on which ministers relied for the guarantee of Malta at the time the tenth article of the treaty was formed. Now, what happened while such was the avowed wish and design of ministers? Ministers signed a treaty, by one article of which Russia is to be invited to be one of the guarantees of the independence of the island; and this ministers do, while, at the very moment they were making this requisition, they were conscious that such a guarantee would be directly contrary to a previous arrangement between this country and Russia. Of a piece with this was the manner in which they had acted with respect to the sale of the priories of the order of Malta in Spain. They knew that without revenues the restoration of the order was utterly impracticable, but, at the very time when the definitive treaty was signed, they had every reason for thinking that in Italy, in Bavaria, and in Spain, the revenues of the order were either confiscated, or on the eve of being confiscated. After all this knowledge, they come forward and call for the guarantees, to pave the way for the restoration of the order. Of the importance of the Cape as a naval station, no diversity of opinion prevailed. It was merely with the view of an absolute necessity of its surrender at the conclusion of peace, that the cession was ever attempted to be justified. With this impression on his mind, it was with no small degree of surprise he found, on referring to the French official papers, that the proposition for ceding the Cape, originated with the ministers of this country; that it was brought forward even so early as the second conference. The right hon. gentleman sat down by giving his cordial vote for the resolutions.

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* said:—I should not, Sir, have risen, were it not that several of the observations that have been so forcibly insisted upon by the right hon. gentleman, seemed to be directed against myself. Much has been remarked upon the treaty of Amiens. I shall now only repeat what I always have said respecting it,—that conscientiously and deliberately I entertain the same opinion of it as I did at the time it was under discussion, namely, that it was a measure not only wise, prudent, and necessary, but that it has been productive of the most beneficial consequences; nor will I hesitate to affirm, that I should not now have to congratulate you, Sir, the House, and the country, on the spirit and the unanimity, which the present emergency has called forth, were it not for that very treaty which is so severely stigmatized. Of the wisdom and beneficial consequences of that treaty, not only do I continue to retain a hardened sense, but I am ready to go further, and to affirm that it was wise and desirable to endeavour to maintain it; and until the causes occurred which produced the present rupture, it was the first wish of my heart, and likewise the first wish of my colleagues, that the peace should be maintained, if it could be maintained consistently with the honour, the dignity, and the interests of the country. But since our anxious wishes in that respect have been frustrated, I trust, Sir, I am prepared to meet the crisis with the feelings of an Englishman; and, anxious as I was to sheath the sword, I shall now be found no less determined to unsheath it, until it appears that the honour of the country remains untouched, and that its safety and independence are effectually secured.—Let me now, Sir, advert to what has been rather harshly observed, respecting the temper with which ministers are said to have borne with the conduct of the French government. Their desire of peace induced them to manifest no inconsiderable share of patience and for-

Digitized by Google

bearance; but they felt that the situation of France itself, and the circumstances in which was placed the person who held the chief rule in that country, called for some allowances. His mind was so pampered with victories; it was so dazzled with the splendor that was shed upon his name, that it might not be fair to expect he would immediately sit down quiet, and soberly examine what might best belong to his new situation. Under that impression, it was judged wise to observe a certain degree of forbearance with respect to what would be noticed in the French government under other circumstances. That forbearance which gentlemen are so prone to censure, ministers, I think, have reason to boast of. It has produced no bad consequences, if we are to have war; it has neither delayed it too long, nor has it brought it on one hour too soon. I have been charged with holding out expectations of the continuance of peace, which have since been proved not to be justified by circumstances. Ministers have also been charged with withholding from parliament those communications which it had a right to expect. We stated that we had no reliance at any time on the continuance of peace, but such as arose from a view of the situation of the enemy, and the consciousness of our own strength. France may have discovered the same restless spirit of ambition that has ever marked her character. Yet, on the occasion to which the right hon. gentleman seems to refer, I did say, that the peace might last as long as any other; and I added, that the only chance of its continuance arose from our energy, and the impregnable security of our resources. I was of the same opinion when the preliminaries were discussed. The same language I held last session. But the right hon. gentleman observes, that the conduct of the French government should have inspired different apprehensions. I am not very much disposed to flatter the person who is now at the head of the French government; but I must say, that I could see nothing in his conduct which led me to believe that it was his policy to renew hostilities. In this, Sir, I may have been deceived; but his sending at the time the remaining navy of France to St. Domingo, his exposing so large a portion both of his naval and military force, were surely reasonable indications of a pacific system; nor can it well be accounted for, but on a principle of peace. It has also been asserted, that in the discussion on his majesty's speech, on the 23rd of November, an assurance was expressed by me, that there was no probability of an immediate rupture. Similar language is said to have been used by me when the question respecting the income of the prince of Wales was under discussion. I am supposed then to have observed that we were in profound peace. That I mentioned our being at peace, I readily agree; but I do not think that I made use of the word "profound." If I added the word "profound," it was probably only from the usual combination of the two words. Let the House consult the speech of his majesty at the beginning of the session, the address, and even the amendment to the address, which were moved on that occasion. Do they imply any thing like the opinion which I am asserted to have uttered? On the contrary, did not the sentiments there expressed create great anxiety in the minds of some gentlemen? Is it likely that I should have expressed a conviction that no renewal of hostilities would take place, at a time when I was agreeing to a large naval and military establishment?—Ministers were also accused of not making formal communications to parliament of the matters that gave rise to the discussions. But, such communications might be attended with the worst effects, and therefore it was prudent to withhold them until the time came for making them with safety. As to the application from Switzerland, it is true, that it took place before the meeting of parliament, but it was then earnestly wished that no resistance should be made on their part. Nor was there then any combination that could give effect to a remonstrance in their behalf. With regard to Holland, the right hon. gentleman complained that vigorous remonstrances had not been made for the removal of the French troops from that country. The contrary would appear from the instructions given to lord Whitworth. Hopes were given by Mr. Liston, on the 5th Nov., that the French troops would evacuate Holland; but on the 12th, that expectation was discouraged. The French government expressed a wish that the troops destined for Louisiana might continue some time longer in the Batavian territories; with which wish the Batavian government seemed disposed to comply; for they hinted a desire that we should forbear to interpose in their behalf. On

Digitized by Google

the subject of the Cape of Good Hope, much had been said, and more value has been attached to that possession than, perhaps, it deserves. In my opinion it is of much less value than other possessions which his majesty's ministers were anxious to retain; and in this opinion I have been confirmed by the concurrence of those who are best qualified to decide upon that question. Besides, the retaining of it would involve a large expense; for during the time we were in possession of it, that expense amounted to two millions. Whatever its value might be estimated at by others, I could never bring myself to imagine that we should forego for its sake the chance of retaining more valuable possessions. The right hon. gentleman, in speaking of Malta, seemed to suppose that an engagement respecting it had been entered into with Russia: no such engagement had taken place. Previous to the conclusion of the preliminaries, a communication had been made to the Russian government of the heads of the arrangement respecting Malta: and then no objection was made to the arrangement, except to that part which related to a Maltese langue. We afterwards, indeed, agreed to adopt the Russian mode of electing the grand master, and hopes were given by lord St. Helen's that Russia would grant her guarantee, but these hopes were disappointed. With regard to the commercial commissioners, my noble friend remonstrated in the most spirited terms, and received a disavowal of the purpose for which they were supposed to be intended. As soon as all hopes had vanished of concluding a commercial treaty, government refused to recognize them, and they were all instructed to remove from the country. Will it now be contended that no remonstrances have been made against the insults and injuries offered by the French government? While there remained a hope of peace no communication was made to parliament, because it was thought that such communication would frustrate the attainment of the desirable object. In whatever light the House may be induced to behold their conduct, ministers are ready to meet its decision. We only call for a decision; we do not venture to ask for approbation: we are anxious, however, to escape censure. If it be merited, we submissively acquiesce in the sentence of the House: but if it be unmerited, let our minds be relieved from the charges which the resolutions now proposed hang over us.

Mr. *Pitt* said;—If I possessed a full and clear opinion, on the merits of the case, to the extent of either directly negativing or adopting the resolutions, I should follow the unbiassed dictates of my conscience, give my vote on that side to which my judgment inclined. If I agreed with my right hon. friend (Mr. Grenville), in thinking that the first steps we ought to take, in duty to the public, were, by a retrospective survey of the conduct of ministers, to judge of their fitness to exercise the functions to which they are called; and if, upon that result, I were forced to conclude, that the papers, on the table, afford evidence of criminality, of incapacity, of misconduct; then, however painful the sacrifice of private feelings might be, in taking such a part in the case of individuals, whom I respect, I should feel myself bound to concur in an address to his majesty, for the removal of his ministers. On the other hand, if I were one of those, who considered the explanation afforded by ministers upon general points, so clear as to justify a decided negative of the propositions which have been moved; a negative which would imply approbation—for in such a matter, to avoid ground of censure, may be considered the same as to have deserved applause—I should feel myself happy in joining in a decisive negative to the motion; but to this extent, either of approbation or of censure, I am unable to go. I cannot concur in the latter, nor in the extent of charges involved in the propositions, which have been moved. Besides, I am aware of the inconvenience that would result, from supporting any measure which has the tendency of the present motion, unless the clearest necessity exists for it. Though I do not dispute the right of this House, to address the king for the removal of ministers, yet, nothing is more mischievous than a parliamentary interference, by declared censure, rendering the continuance of ministers in office impossible, unless that interference is justified by extraordinary exigency of affairs. Not disputing the right of the House, I contend that the right is to be governed by a sound discretion, and by the public interest: we must look to considerations of public expediency, of public safety. There are some questions, in the discussion of which gentlemen must feel more than they can well express; and this, with regard to

Digitized by Google

the interference of parliament for removing ministers, is one of them. Admitting even, that there were considerable grounds of dissatisfaction at the conduct of ministers, would it tend to promote those exertions, to encourage those sacrifices, which the difficulty and danger of our situation require? Would our means of sustaining the struggle, in which we are engaged, and of calling forth those resources necessary for our defence, be improved by cutting short the date of administration, and unsettling the whole system of government? To displace one administration, and to introduce a new one, is not the work of a day. With all the functions of executive power suspended; with the regular means of communication between parliament and the throne interrupted; weeks, nay months, wasted in doubt, uncertainty, and inaction, how could the public safety consist, with a state of things so violent and unnatural, as would result from parliament rendering one administration incapable of exercising any public functions, without any other efficient government being obtained in its stead? I will venture to hint also, that after such a step, any administration that should succeed, be it what it might and what it would be, must still depend upon the crown would feel itself placed in a most delicate situation. To put the matter as conscientiously and delicately as possible; would any set of men feel their introduction to power, in these circumstances, to be such as to enable them to discharge, in a manner satisfactory to themselves, the duties which so eventful a period must impose? These are considerations for the crown and the public; and they outweigh all those which present themselves, on a partial view of the advantages which could be hoped, from a prosecution of that censure and dissolution of administration, to which the propositions tend. I am aware that the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer, and my friends on the same bench with him, must feel their situation irksome, under the weight of a question so important, in which they are personally involved, remaining undecided. Nevertheless, when other sacrifices are demanded for the public interest, personal feelings must be overlooked. Those who, with me, have not made up their minds to the extent of censuring ministers by the adoption of the propositions; or of approving their conduct, by agreeing to a direct negative, must pursue some middle course. They cannot do that which implies approbation, when they do not find, from the case made out, that approbation has been deserved; neither can they vote severe censure, leading to an address for removal, when they do not consider the charges made, as completely sustained. Having stated the opposite lines of conduct, which present themselves in deciding upon the propositions, I do not intend to enter into any detailed discussion of the papers. I wish, if good cannot be obtained by continuing to discuss them, comparable to the evil of interrupting the course of our parliamentary duty, to suspend them altogether. Since things more urgent, and more important demand our care, let us make good the parliamentary pledge we have given. I shall behold, with much greater satisfaction, as first proofs of our determination to support his majesty, with our lives and fortunes, you, Sir, presenting a strong bill of supply, providing resources, not merely for every demand of public service, but adequate to every scale of execution; a measure that will display and call forth the means of sustaining the struggle, not merely for one year, but till we shall have brought it to a successful issue; some measure, by which we shall be enabled to complete our army and to call into action the national strength and give activity to all the military skill, discipline, and experience we possess. Impressed, as I am, with these feelings, and unprepared for the decisive vote which is offered in the direct negative or affirmative to the propositions before the House, I move, "that the other orders of the day be now read."

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that never before, had he risen with such feelings as those that now oppressed him. With every wish to do justice to the motives of his right hon. friend, in making the motion with which he had concluded his speech, he and his colleagues should be shrinking from their duty to themselves, if they could accept the compromise offered between a direct censure and a total acquittal. A charge of crimination, founded upon papers laid upon the table, had been brought forward. He asked, if there was an instance in which propositions, founded on such documents, and involving the conduct of ministers, had not been met with a direct negative or affirmative? A motion of in-

Digitized by Google

quiry might be got rid of, by a previous question; but when a direct charge was made, grounded on facts, rising out of public documents, a previous question was not the fit way of disposing of the subject. No man was more ready than he was, to acknowledge the prerogative of the crown to choose its own ministers; but, on the other hand, ministers were responsible to parliament for the exercise of their functions; and, when parliament saw sufficient grounds of censure, they ought to state it; and then ministers, no longer able usefully to serve the public, ought to retire. Independently of private considerations, he must contend, that the credit of the government ought to be maintained, particularly at such a crisis as the present. But he had no difficulty in saying, that those who wished to destroy the administration, ought to vote for the resolutions, because that was their obvious tendency, while the vote which his right hon. friend had proposed, would have the effect to discredit government, to leave them discredited, in possession of functions, which they could not exercise, with honour to themselves, or advantage to the public. His right hon. friend had declined going into details. He wished, however, that he had pointed out those parts of the conduct of ministers, which he could not approve, that they might have had an opportunity of meeting any charge, or explaining what was deemed exceptionable. It was possible, that in a long and arduous course of conduct, some points might be liable to objection. In a country like this, however, he always considered it to be the fair principle, both of support and of opposition to ministers; that those who agreed or disagreed with them, should do so on a general system. It was not to be expected, that all should approve every particular point. They were to overlook minor differences, for the sake of giving effect to the general scheme of measures and conduct which they approved. These, he had always understood, were the general principles, and he regretted that his right hon. friend had not made up his mind to act upon them. He asked, whether, after surveying the conduct of ministers, during a period of unexampled difficulty, he was not now prepared to say yes or no, directly to a motion of censure? On the Russian armament, he well remembered, that his right hon. friend, and himself, had not thought it sufficient to get rid of a motion of censure, by a previous question; but, in circumstances, when the government in one point had given up, yet the charges were met boldly, and directly negatived. He wished, that on the present occasion, ministers might either be acquitted or condemned. He was sure, from what he knew of his right hon. friend, that his motives in bringing forward the previous question, were pure and upright; but ministers could not acquiesce in the discredit of a suspended censure. If it were the desire of ministers to retain their places, at all hazards, they might accept the compromise which had been offered; but he could say for himself and his colleagues, that they had no desire to remain in office, any longer than they could be useful to their country. If he felt himself reduced to that situation, in which he could not serve it with advantage, he would carry the seals to the feet of his gracious sovereign, and intreat him to appoint a successor more worthy. It was that they might not remain in office discredited and useless, that he must oppose the previous question; for he could not think of remaining an hour in office, after having forfeited the confidence of the House, and the good opinion of the country.

Mr. *Canning* said:—I rise, Sir, under the impression of feelings scarcely less painful than those which have been manifested by my noble friend, to state the reasons which govern the vote that I am about to give. And in giving this vote, whether I look at my noble friend, or at my right hon. friend who has moved the order of the day, I feel a degree of pain and reluctance, which nothing less than a conscientious sense of duty could enable me to subdue. By this overruling sense of duty I find myself compelled to differ, for the first time in my life, from my right hon. friend. But let it not therefore be imagined, that in following a different course for myself, I presume to insinuate the smallest blame, to hint a doubt of the propriety of that which, with his view of the subject, he has chosen for himself, and for those who may come, like him, with unpledged opinions to this discussion. Far from it. I admit, on the contrary, that whoever has either not completely made up his mind to the extent of that charge against ministers which is contained in the resolutions, or whoever, agreeing even in opinion as to the justice of that charge up to its full ex-

Digitized by Google

tent, is persuaded (like my right hon. friend) that greater mischief may be to be apprehended from pushing such an opinion to a parliamentary declaration, than from suffering it to pass by undecided, and to be (if possible) buried in oblivion; whatever gentleman there may be, who joins with my right hon. friend, entertaining these opinions, that man is bound, as I think, to adopt the line of conduct which he has suggested, and to avail himself of the opportunity which is afforded to him of escaping from a decision which he could not negative with truth, and which he thinks cannot be affirmed without public mischief. For myself, I have no such refuge open to me. I entertain a full conviction of the truth of every one of the charges which these resolutions contain; and have no hesitation in avowing, that I think the continuance of a blundering and incapable administration, at a crisis like the present, a more certain mischief to the country than any that can arise from a public declaration by parliament of its opinion of their incapacity and misconduct. I therefore am perfectly prepared for a decisive vote upon this question. The papers which ministers have laid before parliament, exhibit, to my mind, abundant proofs that our affairs have been grossly mismanaged. The production of these papers appears to me not only to afford the natural opportunity, but to throw down a challenge to all those who have, like myself, expressed a strong presumptive opinion against the conduct of ministers, to repeat or retract that expression now that their conduct is fully before us. And it is, as I think, a challenge which, so situated, we have hardly the option to decline. I consider myself bound, therefore, to comply with the demand of my noble friend, and, much as I lament that one for whom I feel so much personal regard, is involved in the issue of the decision, I will at least do him the justice which he requires, by voting in the first instance against a proposition which (however justifiable on the grounds on which it is offered) would prevent that decision, which ministers are entitled to expect on the part of those who are prepared and pledged to come to it.—Mr. Canning then proceeded to take a rapid survey of the resolutions. The first was a mere truism, stating in the words of the declaration itself, the sense which ministers appear, by that declaration, to have entertained of the conduct of France. To this he apprehended no objection could be urged. The second contrasted the conduct which ministers had thought proper to hold, and the language which they had used, and the impressions which they had studiously created throughout the country, with what now appeared to have been all along their own real opinions —a contrast and contradiction not more disgraceful to ministers themselves, than mischievous to the country which had been duped by it. Could any man reflect without indignation on the deception and delusion so long practised upon parliament and upon the people? Could any man recall to his mind, without disgust, the canting professions of belief in the continuance of peace and amity, and goodwill between this country and France, uttered in that House almost daily, before Christmas, nay, even up to within ten days of the declaration of war, or, what was nearly the same thing, of the king's message—uttered at moments (as it now appeared) when the secret thoughts and internal convictions of ministers were directly at variance with the assertions which they made? Could any man consider the consequences of this system of deceit, and not think some marked censure upon those who had dared to employ it, absolutely necessary? Should it be borne that parliament should have been called upon to vote under false pretences? that members should have been sentdown among their constituents (as had happened at the Christmas recess) to spread falsehood and error throughout the country; and that the confiding country should have been misled into incorrect and groundless views, and deluded into visionary hopes, only that it might feel more seriously the blow of disappointment? For what purpose could it be that ministers had thought this system of deception, this trick upon the nation, adviseable? Was it design? What possible good could arise from it? Are men better prepared for action when they are roused out of a sleep, and, as they fancy, secure slumber? or was it in sport only that ministers spread these gay delusions? Was it matter of amusement to them to engage the commerce of the country in wide speculations and hazardous enterprises, that they might see how men would look, when a sudden and unexpected check wrested their progress, or prevented their expected returns? or was it sheer ignorance? Did

Digitized by Google

they not know what they were about? Is it their excuse for having duped England, that they were themselves the dupes of France? Had they in their possession, had they before their eyes, and in their minds, those documents which they have now at length put into the hands of parliament, those records of insult, injury, and aggression, sufficient, one should think, to awaken the most sluggish suspicion; and did they suspect nothing of the insecurity of their peace?

There was but this alternative, either they must have been deceived themselves, or they must wilfully and wantonly, and most audaciously have imposed upon the public; in representing as solid, substantial, and durable, that peace, whose baseless fabric was at that very moment crumbling under their feet.—He would not refer to the instances which had been particularly quoted, to those expressions of the chancellor of the exchequer so rashly hazarded, and now so ingeniously explained. He did not say, "profound peace." Did he not? The many who thought they heard him must have been wonderfully mistaken; or if he did say, "profound," (he might have said it then, it appeared) it was only because "profound" and "peace" were so apt to come together. Happy, dignified, and satisfactory explanation! He would not dwell upon this point. He would content himself with expressing his hearty adoption of every word of a resolution, which went to mark with censure, reprobation, and contempt, a system so unworthy of the government of a country like this.—The third resolution no man could compare with the papers, and with the avowals extorted from ministers, without feeling a painful conviction of its truth. Not only did it appear, beyond contradiction, that opportunities had been lost, for checking the aggressions of France by timely representation and dignified remonstrance — not only had the grossest insults been passed by without any attempt to obtain reparation, the most flagrant violations of treaty suffered to continue without observation; but it appeared now, from the avowal of the chancellor of the exchequer, that these omissions, on the part of his majesty's government, had been omissions, not of negligence, but of design. They had, it seems, been remiss upon system: they had studiously suffered their wrongs to accumulate; they had diligently noted them, to be sure, as they occurred; and why?—because they thought, in their profound wisdom, the government of Buonaparté entitled to peculiar indulgence! With other governments they would have been all courage, and vigilance, all high point of honour and quick resentment of injury. But Buonaparté was not to be bound to common rules! His green and raw usurpation was entitled to privileges and indulgences which would have been denied to hereditary monarchy, and ancient, recognized, legitimate sway! I am glad that the right hon. gentleman has fairly avowed his system. It is exactly what I have all along suspected it to be. I say, Sir, that this is the very error, the fundamental fault, of the system upon which the conduct of our government towards France has been regulated; and in my conscience I believe it is to this that we are in a great measure to attribute the struggle in which we are now involved. Our stand ought to have been made not on the last insult, but on the first; be it what it might. Unusual indulgence to Buonaparté! He ought to have been watched; and to have known that he was watched with unusual jealousy. The first moment that he outstepped, with regard to this country, the line of respect, of decency, of honourable consideration to which we feel ourselves intitled, he should have been met with firmness, and plainly given to understand that it was not so that Great Britain was accustomed to be treated; that she would herself respect a power with whom she had made peace, but that she expected, and would demand, urge, and, if necessary, enforce, equal, reciprocal respect in her turn. Would you then have precipitated the war? In my conscience I believe I should have retarded, possibly have prevented it. One insult tamely borne is an invitation to a second. An injury helplessly acquiesced in, is a signal for more. Temperately and steadily opposed in his first attempt upon our interests, or upon our honour, Buonaparté would have hesitated before he tried a second experiment. As it was, he had nothing to deter him. He had every temptation to proceed. He saw plainly enough that he was considered, as the right hon. gentleman now owns he did consider him, as a privileged person—that an untitled usurper was in the eyes of the British ministry a favoured power — and he used his privilege accordingly. I do not wonder at him. I hardly blame him. Flesh and blood—at least a tyrant's flesh

Digitized by Google

and blood—could hardly resist the temptation of trampling upon unresisting imbecility. But for my country I do complain, that its honour has been sacrificed, and its interests trifled with, in a vain and foolish attempt to propitiate violence by submission, and to repel aggression by tameness and indulgence. I do complain, that instead of having taken the best chance of averting war altogether, by a timely notice of our determination to encounter it rather than submit to oppression or to shame, we have ensured the war, such as it now comes upon us, and have gained by our system of forbearance no other advantage than this whining catalogue of unredressed grievances, to which the right hon. gentleman appeals, as a proof of his wisdom and moderation, but which I consider as the strongest evidence of weakness and misconduct.—With regard to the fourth resolution, as it had been so unanswerably argued by his right hon. friend (Mr. Grenville) he would not enter into any additional argument. He would content himself with expressing his firm persuasion that the present ministers were the first statesmen who ever imagined that the most likely way of bringing to a happy conclusion any point upon which they intended to make a stand was, to put previously out of their hands all collateral means of pressing it to advantage; that when, from the beginning, they were determined to take their stand upon the article of Malta, it did seem to him to be the very height of inconsistency, weakness, and improvidence, not to have turned the possession of the Cape to the obvious advantage of which it was capable, that of making it tell upon the settlement of their other disputes, and specifically upon that of the dispute respecting Malta. All the evils, whatever they were, attending the recapture of the Cape they had already incurred. They had by this act rivetted Holland in the chains of France. But having done this, having ensured all the mischief arising from their own act, that they should wantonly throw away all the possible good, implied a degree of folly utterly irreconcileable with the character and conduct of any ministry, except that whose mistakes and mismanagements were the subject of the resolutions now before the House. This only was wanting to hasten the war, which their previous neglect of their obvious duty, and surrender of the honour of the country, had, perhaps, already rendered unavoidable. It was to throw away the only remaining chance of an adjustment, the only means for the preservation of peace with safety, which their former profuse concessions had left for a moment in their hands. Subscribing, therefore, to the truth of every allegation contained in the resolutions to which he had referred, he could have no hesitation in giving a hearty assent to the resolution which asserts, that by these instances of misconduct the ministers had proved themselves unworthy of the confidence of parliament, and incapable of administering the public affairs to advantage at a crisis of such difficulty and danger. In his conscience he fully subscribed to, and adopted, the averment of this resolution also; and with all the solemnity which he felt to belong to such a declaration, he declared, that he did not think the country safe while the administration of its affairs was suffered to continue in such hands.

The question being put, That the other orders of the day be now read, the House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Mr. Long ..... Mr. Robert Dundas.....	56
Noes	Mr. Attorney General... Sir John Honeywood ...	333

So it passed in the negative. Upon which Mr. Pitt and several of his friends left the House. And the previous question being put, that the said first proposed question be now put, it passed in the negative. The second resolution being put,

Mr. *Fox* said, he should not vote for the resolution, though it was impossible for him to approve of the conduct of ministers. He hoped that what had occurred would be a warning to them how they kept the House in the dark to the last moment. He could not agree to a vote of censure, because he did not know but that the successors of the present ministry might be more objectionable to him than they were.

The House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Mr. Canning ..... Earl Temple	34
Noes	Mr. Wallace ..... Lord Hervey	275

Mr. Fox and several of his friends left the House without dividing. The third

Digitized by Google

and fourth resolutions were then negatived. The fifth was withdrawn; and at four in the morning, the House adjourned.

Debate in the Lords on the Conduct of Ministers.] June 2. Earl *Fitzwilliam* brought forward certain resolutions, condemning the general conduct of ministers, in having held forward to the nation a confident expectation of a permanent peace, during the time that France was pursuing a hostile system towards this country. His lordship prefaced his motion by an able speech, in which he first pointed the attention of the House to the conduct of our ministers and of France, at the time of the treaty of Amiens. During the negotiation, the first consul, in contempt of decency, pursued his constant system of aggression. It was then that he made himself president of the Italian republic; changed Piedmont into a military arrondissement; annexed Parma and Placentia to France: and it was after France had thus aggrandized herself, that our ministers consented to cede the conquered colonies also. When the first consul next seized upon Switzerland, our ministers sent a person over to that country with offers of assistance, which could evidently be productive of no advantage to the Swiss. Numerous insults and aggressions had been passed over, without any spirited remonstrance, until, at length, the report of Sebastiani forced government to retain Malta. He considered the uniform conduct of the present ministry to be such as neither to command respect at home or abroad, and that they had proved themselves utterly unworthy of the confidence of the public. He then read a series of resolutions, which were exactly similar to those proposed in the House of Commons by Mr. Patten [See p. 1535]. The first resolution being put,

The Earl of *Limerick* vindicated the conduct of administration, in the several points which had been alluded to by the noble mover. As to their conduct with respect to Switzerland, it was not their fault, that the continental powers would not interfere to save it. In the negotiation which had ended in war, he thought they deserved approbation instead of censure; they had avoided war as long as it was possible to avoid it with honour. He concluded by dwelling, with animation, on the rooted hostility of the first consul towards this empire, and his desire to remove from the neighbourhood and eyes of the French people, the image of a free country.

Earl *Grosvenor* defended the conduct of ministers, and moved the previous question.

Lord *Mulgrave* thought the present time improper for such discussions, as the greatest unanimity was now required; he therefore moved the question of adjournment.

The Earl of *Caernarvon* deprecated an adjournment, and condemned the conduct of ministers. They had found the country, at the time they had the presumption to undertake its government, in the possession of many valuable acquisitions, which had been the fruit of former victories. These they had abandoned to France. Whatever private virtues ministers might possess, he considered the want of talents to be as highly criminal in those who had the direction of state affairs, as he did the want of courage to be in an officer.

Lord *Ellenborough* said, he could not sit still when he heard the capacity of ministers arraigned by those who were themselves most incapable, and when he saw ignorance itself pretending to decide on the knowledge possessed by others. He warmly vindicated the firmness and ability displayed by ministers in the whole of the negotiation, and during the whole course of their administration.

Lord *Melville* supported the question of adjournment, as he thought it was better not to discuss the question, than to discuss it partially. He expressed a strong disapprobation of many parts of the conduct of ministers, but thought it would be a dangerous time to address his majesty to remove them, as this was not a season in which the country could bear to be any time without an administration; and there might be a considerable difficulty in agreeing who should be the new ministers, even were the present removed.

Lord *Hobart* complained of the manner in which ministers had been treated. It was evident that the adjournment would be an indirect censure upon ministers.

Lord *Grenville*, although he disapproved in a variety of instances of the conduct of ministers, said, that he had hitherto abstained from expressing his disapprobation for fear we might appear to the enemy, not so firmly united as we ought to be. Of all the various acts of misconduct of the present administration, there were none which he condemned more severely

Digitized by Google

than their uniform system of withholding the necessary information from parliament.

The *Lord Chancellor* vindicated the conduct of ministers. He allowed that in a business so complicated, partial errors might have been committed, deprecated the motion for adjournment, and pressed for an immediate decision.

At half past four in the morning the House divided upon the motion of adjournment: Contents, 18; Not-contents, 106. The House again divided on the previous question: Contents, 14; Not-contents 96. So it passed in the negative. The second resolution was also negatived; after which, the debate on the remaining resolutions was adjourned till the 6th.

June 6. Earl Fitzwilliam having, after a short speech, moved the third resolution [See p. 1536], a long debate ensued, in the course of which, the resolution was opposed by the duke of Cumberland, lord Coventry, lord Grosvenor, lord De Dunstanville, lord Hobart, the Lord Chancellor, and lord Pelham; and supported by lord Minto, the earl of Warwick, lord Carysfort, lord Grenville, and earl Spencer. On a division, the numbers were, for the resolution, 17; Against it 86. The remaining resolutions were negatived without a division.

Debate on the Army Estimates.] June 6. The *Secretary at War* having brought forward some of the Army Estimates of the year, and stated, that but a small augmentation was intended to be made in the regular army,

Mr. *Windham* said, that his object in rising, was not so much to comment upon the details which had been laid before the House, as to take the opportunity, which the army estimates always afforded, of making some observations upon the war and the general state of the country. The first subject upon which he should make any observations, was, the propriety of having so large a part of our force to consist of militia. He thought the scale upon which it was proposed to form the military force was wrong, because the population of the country was such, that it would not afford, at once, a large militia and a large army. In fact, the system pursued of late years, if it did not "suckle armies and dry-nurse the land," must at least, be said to suckle the militia and dry-nurse the army. If such large bounties were given to men who engaged only for a few years, and for home-service, how was it to be supposed, that for a small bounty men would be induced to enter the army, to serve for life and in every quarter of the globe? The army, in such a state of things, must not only stand still, it must go backwards, for it was not to be conceived, that, with these high bribes, desertion would not become general. In fact, desertion, it was well known, had become a sort of trade. Men got a livelihood by passing from corps to corps, and performing, what they called, the grand tour. If, at the end of the tour the man remained in the service, the only effect of all these bounties was, that you had obtained a soldier in the militia or fencibles, in exchange for a soldier in the regular army. One reason, perhaps, for this anxiety for augmenting the militia, was, that the money with which they were levied, did not come in the shape of a direct tax, and therefore, it was thought, would pass without notice. But this was a poor and criminal policy. The money, though not raised avowedly by parliament, was equally drawn from the pockets of the people. His general objection, however, to the measure was, that it would create a militia, and not an army. It was the duty of those entrusted with the government of a country, in the first place, to form in their own minds, some idea of the nature of the war which they were to carry on, and then to regulate the public force accordingly. After endeavouring to preserve peace as long as they could, and longer than they ought, ministers were forced into war, when all their means of concession and submission were exhausted, and when no option was left; and finding themselves in that situation, they seemed to have no idea of doing any thing but what they understood to have been usual on such occasions, and what the situation itself, indeed, necessarily forced upon them. They issued press-warrants, they offered bounties, they sent out recruiting parties, they put ships in commission, they did whatever they were told was regular and proper. If they could be said to have any plan at all, it seemed to be one of strict defence; that is to say, we were to wait passively, until we could find an opportunity of sneaking into a peace, as we had just sneaked out of one. There was not an instance, in which a nation successfully carried on a system of pure defence. But it remained to be con-

Digitized by Google

sidered how far a force of this sort was good, even as a mere defensive force. It appeared to him that for the purposes of defence, we ought to have as large a regular force as possible, because regular forces could only be opposed by regular forces: it was "diamond cut diamond." But even adopting the system that ministers were acting upon, and admitting the number of men to be realized, he should contend that there would not be men enough, supposing an invasion to take place: and in the mean time that such exertions were made to raise an ineffectual force, the recruiting of an army, the force certainly most effectual, would be essentially impeded. If, at last, it would be necessary to have recourse to more extensive and energetic means of raising the force of the country, it would, in his opinion, be better to begin with them. He would have a force still less regular than the militia, but one that should not stand in the way of recruiting the army. Some such measure must in the end, be resorted to; and, in his opinion, it would be better to adopt it in the first instance. The only means we had to adopt was, either to strengthen ourselves, or to weaken the enemy; or we could not exist as an independent nation. This being the case, it remained only to consider the order in which these subjects were to be taken, and what the means by which they might severally be pursued. In touching upon this point fairly, he would refer for a moment to the events of last war. In that war, it appeared to him that the plan of weakening the enemy was not only the most proper, but, by far, the shortest and most practicable. He thought it would be more easy to kill the revolutionary tiger, than to chain or to cage him. To that object, therefore, almost the whole force of this country ought to have been directed, though there was no reason, in the meanwhile, that the other object should have been lost sight of. The same objects that existed at that time, exist at present; though, certainly, the progress of time may have changed the relations of these objects, as well as the means of attaining them. That which before was practicable, might now be hopeless; and, in that case, could be no longer an object of pursuit; for he knew of no situation so deplorable, as that of remaining, with respect to France, in our present relative state, with no means of augmenting our own force, or of diminishing that of our rival. Whatever might be thought, therefore, of the project of reducing the power of France; in the only way in which it can be reduced, namely, by co-operation with parties within, it had, at least, this recommendation, that if practicable at all, it was at once the most effectual and the most easy. Whether we believed or not in the truth of the notion, it was, at least, one which we must wish to be true. As Mrs. Cole said of the Roman Catholic religion, "that it was a most comfortable persuasion to one of her calling;" so we may say, that a possible co-operation with royalists and destruction of the present revolutionary government, or, which is the same thing, restoration of the ancient monarchy, is a very comfortable persuasion to persons in our situation. If some means of this kind were not adopted, the prospect before us would be gloomy indeed, in spite even of that mediation, of which gentlemen had talked so much, but from which, for his own part, he so little hoped any good. We were to consider what the task was, of restoring the lost balance of Europe, by the addition of consequence and power to ourselves. The treaty of Amiens had, by one stroke, taken from the power and consequence of this country, in point of actual possessions, to say nothing of character, what we might be well satisfied if ten years of successful war would replace. We had, in one fatal moment, so fallen to leeward, that unless some fortunate shift of wind should come to favour us, we might be beating for years and years against a head-sea without regaining our former station. If he were asked what his hopes were of doing any thing at this moment, either in France itself or on the rest of the continent (the powers of the continent could hardly be considered in existence), he should certainly say "very little;" thanks to the treaty of Amiens, which had given away the powers and the mind of the continent from us, and had made the whole coast of Europe an iron-bound coast to us, not affording an inlet or a creek into which we could run a cutter. It might be said, that the powers of the continent detested France; he believed they did: but did gentlemen never hear of that maxim of tyrants, "Oderint dum metuant?" He, however, could not entirely abandon the hope, which he had placed in the exertions which the continent would, some time or other, make

Digitized by Google

for itself, and therefore he was the more hostile against the scheme of policy now proposed because it would not only render such exertions infinitely less probable but would make us incapable of taking advantage of them should they be made. It was his opinion, that if England would make an open declaration, in the face of Europe, of her views and objects, he did not mean a romantic, chivalrous declaration but, one that would draw with us the sympathy and feeling of all Europe, it would contribute more than any single act, to terminate the calamities which now oppressed the world. Much was always said of the great power of the French republic, but it was by no means right to confound together ideas so separate as those of strength and durability. Nothing was more intelligible than that a nation or individual might be at the period of their greatest strength, when they touched the very moment of their dissolution. The power of France was, at this time, indisputable; but how long that power would exist was a different question. That we wished and hoped to see an end to it, it was impossible for us to deny, notwithstanding all the dissembling and crouching language which we held at certain times, and all the boastful and vapouring which we indulged in at others. That prospect was at the bottom of all our hopes. Every thing which he saw in our plans and counsels, as well as in those who were to conduct them, was calculated to throw him into despair; but he begged that this declaration might not be understood as implying any distrust in the resources and strength of the country, supposing them to be properly applied. Much as he thought of the dangers of invasion (and few persons were inclined to treat them more seriously), they were only formidable to him from the idea of the manner in which they might possibly be met. We were in the state of a ship in a storm. The vessel was tight and well-found, and nothing was wanted but care and conduct, to enable it to brave all the fury of the elements. But if the officers were ignorant or negligent, if the crew were drunken and mutinous, if all proper precautions were not taken, and all proper exertions used, down she might go with all the means of safety in her power. We must not dissemble to ourselves the violence of the storm, with which we were threatened. We had to deal with an adversary who would not do things by halves; and who had the resources of a continent at his command. Against such an attack he confessed he wished to have something more than the mere loose notions, and vapouring talk of which we heard so much in that House. He entertained a high idea of the native courage of the people of this country; but he did not quite understand the notion, which many seemed to rely on with confidence, of stopping armies by peasantry. An army incapable of recruiting itself, may be finally worn down by the continued attacks even of irregular troops; but he wished to know where the examples were to be found of armies stopped by such troops, unless, possibly in circumstances far different from the present. He believed that none of the generals whose names were familiar to us, either in earlier or more recent history, when they had beaten the army before them, ever asked leave of the peasantry of the country, to pursue their march in whatever direction they thought proper. Such notions belonged only to men, who were totally ignorant of what they were talking about, who had never heard a gun fired in anger,

"Nor in the division of a battle knew
"More than a spinster."

Men who had really pretensions to be heard upon such subjects, would talk a different language, would tell us that invasion was neither to be despised nor dreaded, or was only to be dreaded, should it happen that by a foolish and ignorant policy it had previously been despised. Upon the whole, whether he considered the interest of the country with a view to the war in general, or, to the narrower and more immediate object of defence, he must equally condemn the present system, which went to create a great and disproportionate militia force, and by the same act, as well as by the means of carrying into effect, to impoverish and keep down the army.

Mr. *Pitt* seemed to consider the number of militia to bear too great a proportion to the whole of our force. A war that should be completely defensive, would, in his opinion, be both dishonourable and ruinous. He wished to establish it as a principle, that whatever was necessary for the defence or the honour of the country, either in men or money, must be obtained.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* agreed in this sentiment, and said, that a considerable defensive force was at present ne-

Digitized by Google

cessary, on account of the extensive preparations of the enemy. The time might come when circumstances would point out the necessity of giving the war a more offensive character, and in such a case, he had no doubt but the population and spirit of the country would furnish the means of supporting it with honour. For the present, he thought it best to direct the attention of the country principally to the means of defence against the vast preparations of the enemy; for this purpose, he relied, not only on the militia, but on the yeomanry and volunteers also, as a subsidiary force, in aid of the regular army.

The resolutions were agreed to.

Debate in the Lords on the Spiritual Persons Relief Bill.] June 10. On the order of the day, for going into a committee on the bill to amend and render more effectual the laws relating to spiritual persons,

The Bishop of *St. Asaph* (Dr. Horsley) spoke as follows;—My lords; upon the second reading of this bill, I declared, that, with an entire approbation of the principle, I was dissatisfied with the fabric of it in many parts. In the general view which I propose to take of the fabric of the bill, I cannot avoid saying something upon the principle of it; for, in considering the fabric of the bill, I must not only consider the connexion of the different clauses with one another, but the relation of them all to the principle of the bill. My lords, the residence of the beneficed clergy upon their benefices, and the abstraction of the clergy from all secular occupations, are two points of principal importance in ecclesiastical discipline. It is impossible generally speaking, that the parish priest should discharge himself of the duty which he owes to the flock committed to him, without his personal residence among them. The public instruction of the people from the pulpit, the public celebration of the offices of the church, are but a part—I had almost said they are but a small part—of the duty which the parish priest owes to his parishioners. My lords, he owes it to them besides, to live among them,—to exhibit in his own deportment, and in the good order of his family, the example of a godly and religious life: He owes it to them, to be present to relieve the distresses of the poor by alms proportioned to his means; and he owes it to them to be ready, at the call of the sick and the dying, to administer those consolations which, to persons in those circumstances, can only be afforded by the word of reconciliation in the gospel, and by the means of reconciliation offered in the sacraments of the church,—to assist the penitent in making his peace with God. And how are these great duties to be performed by a clergyman not resident in his parish? My lords, this is not all; the resident clergyman is to maintain the pure-dignified character of a clergyman unembarrassed and unsullied with the low occupations of the world.

My lords, before the statute of Henry the 8th, the enforcement of these two points of ecclesiastical discipline was entirely in the hands of the ecclesiastical superiors: they were enforced by the canons, and by ecclesiastical censures and penalties; and the temporal laws and the temporal courts had nothing to do with either. I mention this, because upon the second reading, a noble duke, opposing the principle of the bill, said that it went to take the clergy in these points out of the hands of judges and juries, and to put them entirely under the bishops. My lords if it were so, this would only be a restoration of things to the old footing: for judges and juries had no concern with these matters before the statute of Henry the 8th. But, my lords, I have no wish that the clergy should be taken out of the hands of judges and juries: I think, that whoever looks to the state of the church, with respect to the residence of the clergy, will find that it has been much improved since the secular authority has been empowered to interpose in it; and that the statute of Henry the 8th, with all its vices on its back, has been, upon the whole, productive of more good than harm; and if a motion were made to repeal that statute, without putting something more equitable and more efficient in in its stead, I would oppose it: so little am I inclined to take the clergy out of the hands of judges and juries. But, my lords, this bill goes to no such effect; it only remedies the iniquity of the bill of Henry the 8th with respect to the penalties of non-residence, and the intolerable rigour of it in the restrictions upon taking in ferm. The statute of Henry the 8th punished non-residence by pecuniary penalties; which were the same, without any discrimination, whatever the means might be of the delinquent to sustain

Digitized by Google

them; and it was therefore unjust; for it is very evident that a penalty of 50*l.* is a much heavier penalty upon a clergyman whose whole income perhaps is not more than 30*l.* per annum, than upon another whose income may be 500*l.* And though in the present state of the church, many allowable causes of non-residence exist, it gave no discretion to judge or jury to mitigate the penalty: nor indeed can such discretion be placed with them, according to the mode of recovering the penalty which that statute prescribes. Now the present bill remedies this iniquity of the old bill, by establishing a scale of penalty justly proportioned to the degree of the delinquency and the means of the delinquent; and it gives a discretional power to the bishops, of dispensing with residence, and relieving from the penalties of the statute, in cases in which non-residence ought to be indulged. My lords, the present bill, like the original statute of Henry the 8th, being intended to enforce residence in all cases in which there is no reasonable cause of exemption, though it places the clergy under the coercion of the secular courts, withdraws them not from the authority of the bishops: on the contrary, it is a farther object of this bill to strengthen the ecclesiastical authority with regard to residence. In theory the ecclesiastical authority in this point is complete. The power of the bishop goes even to deprive a contumacious non-resident of his benefice. Nevertheless, the exercise of this power is so difficult as to render the power itself almost useless. It is exercised only in the bishops' courts; where the process is so tedious, and may run to such an expense, that few bishops are willing or indeed able, if they have many opulent non-residents to deal with, to engage in it. This bill therefore wisely puts the exercise of this power into the bishop's own hands, without any interference of his court. And, my lords, the length and expensiveness of the proceedings in our courts are not the only considerations which make it expedient that the power should be placed in ourselves personally. In the courts of the archbishop, of the bishops of London, Winchester, Rochester, and all the dioceses which have their courts here in town, justice, I am persuaded, is as regularly administered as in any of his majesty's courts in Westminster-hall; but in the provincial courts, I fear the case is not quite the same, especially in matters in which clergymen are interested; because the judges of those provincial courts are themselves clergymen. When I was bishop of St. David's, I gave one of the best livings in the patronage of that see a rectory in Cardiganshire with a good house upon it, to a clergyman, under the most explicit and solemn promises of residence. When he was in possession of the living, he represented to me, that he had a curacy in Glamorganshire (which indeed I knew to be the case); and he hoped I would not so insist upon his promise, but that I would give him some time to detach himself from his engagements there. The request seemed reasonable; and I told him I would give him half a year. The half year passed away; and my clerk was still upon his curacy in Glamorganshire, and seemed to have made no preparations for fixing himself upon his rectory. I began to suspect that he meant to elude his promise. Another half year was consumed in remonstrances on my part, and shuffling excuses on his; and when I was preparing to come to town for the winter season, I sent for him, and after some warm expostulations with him, I said to him "Sir, take notice, that, if I do not find you in residence upon your living when I return into the country next summer, I shall take measures that may be very disagreeable to you." Upon my return to my diocese the ensuing summer, I found my clerk was not yet in residence: and I caused a process to be instituted against him, in order to his deprivation, in my consistory court. He was up to the business: he took advantage of all the causes of delay which the nature of the proceedings admit; and after a whole twelvemonth's litigation, and some expense incurred, this unprincipled clergyman, through the connivance of my own court, slipped through my fingers; the judge of my court being a non-resident clergyman. This instance shows the expediency of placing the offence of non-residence under the coercion of the bishop himself, in a summary way; as is wisely proposed to be done by this bill.

My lords, another part of the bill goes to release the immoderate rigour of the statute of Henry the 8th in the prohibition upon the clergy of taking in ferm. The whole principle of the bill therefore consists of three parts: it goes to do away the injustice of the statute of Henry the 8th in the part relating to the residence of the clergy, at the same time that it en-

Digitized by Google

hances the penalties upon culpable non-residence; it goes to invigorate the episcopal authority; and to give relief in the matter of taking in ferm. The restraints of the statute of Henry the 8th in that matter are most unquestionably extravagant and intolerable. Nevertheless, it is a matter of the first importance to abstract the clergyman from those occupations which would degrade his character in the eye of the laity; it is certainly the ancient constitutions, that a clergyman should be a clergyman, and nothing else. Far be it from me to join my voice to the despicable cant of puritanism; as if it were the duty of a clergyman to withdraw himself entirely from the commerce and society of the world, and that every moment of his time is sinfully employed which is not given up to meditation and prayer, and studies strictly theological. My lords, there is no branch of learning that misbecomes a clergyman: he that would understand the Bible, in such a manner as he ought to understand it who is to expound it, should be deeply skilled, as the writer of a great part of it was, "in all the learning of the Egyptians." I have not scrupled to tell the clergy, *ex cathedra*, that a clergyman's time is not always misspent when he is studying the proportions of architecture and the divisions of the monichord: for I assert, in contempt and defiance of all the whining cant of Puritans, that there is no branch of abstruse science or polite literature which may not be useful, which may not be even necessary, for the illustration of some part or another of the book which it is our duty to expound. And as to intercourse with the world, I hold that none can be qualified to instruct the world without it: he who is to teach men their duty practically, must know human nature generally, and the particular manners of his country and his times. But, my lords the clergy should be kept apart from those occupations which would degrade them from the rank which they ought to hold in society, and mix them in familiar habits with the inferior orders—from every thing indeed which would give them a lay character. I know that it becomes me to speak tenderly of farming, the fondled bantling of the present times. Agriculture is an occupation for the gods: can the character of a country curate be degraded by his addicting himself to those pursuits which procured divine honours to Ceres and Triptolemus? But, my lords, I beseech you to remember that this godlike occupation of farming will not be taken up by the inferior clergy, if they are allowed to engage in it, in the manner in which some of your lordships apply to it, for your own amusement, for the public benefit and to your own great loss;—they will apply to it as a business, and for gain: the country curate, if he turns farmer, will take part in the labours of husbandry: he will wield the sithe and the sickle; he will fodder the kine, and help to throw out the dung upon his land; and thus he would be associated with the labouring peasantry; even the business of the markets, which he will attend to show his own samples and make his own bargains, will mix him too much in familiar habits with the lower farmers, and thus the whole dignity and sanctity of his character will be obliterated. The restrictions of the old statute are certainly rigorous in the extreme, and require relaxation: but when we come to the consideration of these clauses, I beseech your lordships to take care that the relaxation is not carried beyond the proper limit,—that the new bill does not exceed in indulgence as much as the old one in severity. I do not say positively that this is the case. It is a very difficult subject, and I have not made up my mind; but it is a matter to be well looked to. And this is all that I shall at present say upon that part of the bill.

With respect to the clause which enacts the penalties of non-residence, I have already expressed my approbation of it. I fear indeed that the time of allowed non-residence is longer than it ought to be: I think, with a little ingenuity, the three months will often be turned into six. My lords, this penal clause is followed by another, containing a very long list of cases of exemption—of absolute exemption, without any interposition of that discretional power of exemption which is given to the bishops in a subsequent part of the bill. Some such exemptions were given by the old bill; and it is certainly proper that they should stand: but many cases are specified, which are either already exempted by the general reservation of the exemptions of the old bill,—and then the enumeration of them *nominatim* only serves to swell the list of exemptions to the public eye, and to give the country a suspicion that we are inventing all sorts of loopholes for the clergy to creep out at; or if they are not so exempted, they are in my judgment not entitled to this

Digitized by Google

absolute exemption: and many others are added, which are certainly improper. I shall mention one as an example. The situation of a minor canon in any cathedral or collegiate church is made one of the grounds of absolute exemption from the penalties of non-residence upon a benefice. It is true the exemption is only given for the time during which the statutes of the cathedral or collegiate church require the minor canon's attendance, and during which he shall accordingly be in attendance, and performing his duty there; but, my lords, I am informed, that the statutes of the church of St. Paul (and the case may be the same in some other cathedrals, though not in all) require the attendance of every minor canon for the whole year; and yet very considerable livings often fall to the share of these minor canons. Now, if a minor canon of St. Paul's were to obtain a living of 12 or 1,300*l.* a year in the diocese of London, and the bishop were to say to him that he ought to be resident upon his great living, though it should oblige him to relinquish his situation in the church of St. Paul's and to give up the petty emolument of his office there,—is it fit that this minor canon should have it to say to the bishop of London, "No, my lord: here I am, a minor canon in your lordship's cathedral; I cling to my stall; and without your lordship's permission to be absent from my living, I defy the penal statute." My lords, in this situation is the bishop of London placed by this clause with respect to a minor canon of his own cathedral.—This clause is followed by another, which gives the bishop of every diocese a discretional power of granting a licence of non-residence for a certain time, in certain enumerated cases, but in certain enumerated cases only. Then follows the clause of enumeration; which is very full; it contains no case which may not be a fair ground of exemption. But, I do strongly object to this principle of enumeration. I apprehend, that the enumeration will have the effect of an advertisement to the clergy of all the pretences upon which they may come to the bishop, and tease him for a licence. I will illustrate this by an example. One of the cases in which a licence of non-residence may be granted is illness or infirmity of body of the incumbent himself, his wife or child;—certainly a most reasonable case. If his own health require the assistance of the air or water of some particular place, it would be very hard that he should not be allowed to remove to that place for a time; and if the ill health of wife or child require such assistance, it would be cruel not to give the husband or father liberty of accompanying them. Highly as I think of the duty of residence, it never should have divided me from a sick wife or a sick child; and a restraint to which I would not submit myself, I would not have imposed on others. But see, what may be the consequence of advertising this as one of the cases entitled to indulgence: see what pretences may be set up on the ground of this advertisement. I suppose a clergyman in affluent circumstances, with a sprightly wife and child, has long been resident on a country living; the lady is grown perfectly sick of this relegation from elegant society in a dull sequestered situation: she says to her husband "My dear, we have been a long time in this dismal place; surely you might get a licence of non-residence for some time; I am dreadfully nervous, you know; you are overloaded with bile; and the poor child is ricketty: Bath would set us all up: ask the bishop for a licence." The husband, perhaps, is a little bashful: he has taken, to be sure, a great deal of rhubarb; the lady never goes through the day without ether: and the child is perpetually swallowing something to strengthen its limbs; but yet he is conscious that there is no such degree of disease among them as would justify him in a request to be non-resident, especially as his situation is a very healthy one; he is unwilling therefore to make the application. "Pho!" says the lady "you are so conscientious! Leave it to me to manage: I will speak to the bishop's lady; she is as nervous as I am, and will take my part from fellow-feeling: I warrant you we shall prevail upon the bishop, who is himself a good-natured man, if you will but get over your foolish scruples, and sign the petition." The man is prevailed upon: the petition is signed; the apothecary of the village can, with a very safe conscience, make affidavit of the ill health of the family; knowing that he has supplied them with medicines in a quantity sufficient to make them all sick if they were not so before hand: The bishop is besieged with the solicitations of the lady and all her friends, among whom his own lady is one of the warmest; and he must muster up a great deal of resolution to stand the siege. And all this inconvenience

Digitized by Google

arises from what I call the advertisement; for, without that, the indulgence might be granted to real ill health; but these solicitations upon the pretence of ill health would not have been invited. My lords, I would propose that the bishop should have this power of licensing, without any enumeration of cases, in every case which in his judgment should be entitled to the indulgence. But, much more than to the clause itself, I object to the proviso annexed to it. It is provided, that if, in any of the enumerated cases, the bishop shall refuse to grant a licence to the clergyman petitioning for it, the clergyman may appeal to the archbishop of the province; who is empowered to grant the licence which the bishop has thought proper to refuse. An appeal, my lords! from what? The licence of non-residence is no matter of right; it is a favour. I understand the propriety of an appeal from a judicial sentence where rights are in question; but I do not understand the propriety of an appeal when a favour only is denied. The clergyman is to go to the archbishop, and say, "My bishop has refused me a favour which I asked: make him grant it." My lords, the appeal given in this case to the archbishop, I assert to be unconstitutional in the highest degree: it invests the archbishop with the ordinary government of every diocese in his province, in matters merely spiritual; in which he has no right to interfere beyond the limits of his own proper diocese. In any other diocese, the archbishop's authority is merely visitatorial; he possesses not an atom of ordinary jurisdiction; and ought not to be introduced to it. My lords, I desire to know in what instance the archbishop is authorized to interfere in the administration of any other diocese than his own, in spirituals. If I refuse to ordain a candidate for holy orders, he has no remedy by appeal to the archbishop. It is true, it is my duty, in such a case, to acquaint the archbishop with my refusal of the candidate, and my reason for refusing him; and to transmit to the archbishop all the testimonials of character and papers of form that were produced to me: not that the archbishop has any power to revise what I have done; but for this purpose,—that the archbishop may send a circular letter to all the other bishops of the province, informing them that such a person has been refused by such a bishop, and requesting that no one of them would ordain him without consulting himself the archbishop or the bishop who first refused. The very terms in which these circular letters are conceived, imply the independence of the bishops in the matter; for the archbishop neither commands me to ordain nor forbids any other to ordain, but advises every other not to proceed to ordination without a consultation. My lords, if a clergyman comes to me with a presentation to a living in my diocese, and I refuse him institution, he has no appeal to the archbishop. The patron has his writ of *quare impedit* in the secular courts,—and very properly: the clerk has no appeal to the archbishop, because institution is a branch of the voluntary jurisdiction in spirituals in which the archbishop has no share; but the patron has his remedy in the king's courts, because his temporal rights are affected. In short, my lords, there is no instance in which the archbishop can meddle with the voluntary jurisdiction. In the contentious jurisdiction in causes between parties agitated in the bishop's court, an appeal certainly lies to the archbishop; and in all such cases, an ulterior appeal lies to the king in chancery,—and very properly; because all this jurisdiction arises out of the civil establishment, and antecedent to establishments was not inherent in the spiritual society as such; but in the voluntary jurisdiction—in matters purely spiritual, there is no authority in any diocese beyond the bishop's; and the attempt to introduce a superior authority, in this instance, is a most outrageous violation of the ecclesiastical constitution,—not merely the particular constitution of the church of this kingdom, but the constitution of the church Catholic, by which every bishop in his own diocese is supreme. And, my lords, this is a matter of no light consideration. The attempted innovation is most dangerous; for ecclesiastical history bears me out in the assertion, that the whole superstructure of the papal tyranny arose out of encroachments and usurpations, small as they seemed in their beginnings, of metropolitans and patriarchs, upon the independent authority of bishops. My lords, I am aware that upon this point some of my reverend brethren have an opinion different from mine. I know that one very learned prelate, whose deep erudition and great talents are far above any praise of mine, to whom I bear the greatest personal regard, and whose opinions are entitled to your lordships' gravest consideration,—I know or have

Digitized by Google

reason at least to believe, that this reverend prelate will tell your lordships, that an archbishop in his opinion, stands related to the bishops of his province just as a bishop stands related to his parish priests; and that the bishop is bound by his oath of canonical obedience to the archbishop, just as the parish priest is bound by his oath of canonical obedience to the bishop. My lords, if the analogy were perfect,—which—in my judgment it is not, it would make for my opinion rather than for his. My lords, the bishop when once he has instituted a rector or vicar, or licensed a perpetual curate to a parish church, has nothing more to do with the cure of souls in that parish; he commits that cure to the priest, and it is entirely gone from himself; and he has no right to interfere with it, otherwise than by his visitatorial authority, to see that the priest in the exercise of it conforms to the laws of the church and the realm. If the priest does any thing contrary to either, the bishop, as visitor, has a right to admonish him; and if admonition is ineffectual, to punish him by ecclesiastical censures and penalties: but no otherwise can he interfere in the cure of souls with which he has invested the priest. To him he commits the care and government of the souls of the parishioners; saving, indeed, to himself and his successors his episcopal rights. Now what are the episcopal rights which are so reserved?—I say, the whole of the visitatorial power; and besides, the right of making use of the church for the performance of some rites which a bishop only can perform; but these make no part of the parochial cure of souls. The bishop has a right to go to the parish church when he thinks proper, to confirm the parishioners, and persons of other parishes, whom he may think proper to call to that church to receive confirmation: he has a right to interfere in some matters without expressly holding a visitation: if the priest takes upon him to repel any person from the holy communion, without consulting the bishop upon the case,—if he takes upon him to reconcile a convert from the church of Rome, and to receive his public recantation, without the permission of the bishop,—if he introduces a curate to take a share with him in the cure of souls,—without the bishop's licence,—these are offences which the bishop may correct: but these are extraordinary cases; making no part of the general parochial cure of souls,—which the bishop is to control and direct so that every thing may be done in order, but he cannot take the exercise of it upon himself: and just so, I say, an archbishop has a visitatorial authority over the bishops of his province, but no right to interfere with them in the exercise of the voluntary jurisdiction over their clergy. And I apprehend that the mistake arises from confounding the voluntary and the contentious jurisdiction. In the contentious jurisdiction which is exercised in the bishop's court, in causes between party and party, an appeal is always open to the archbishop's court, and an ulterior appeal to the king in chancery; and this extends to the bishop's government of his clergy, so far as it is exercised in his court. If a clergyman upon any offence committed, be libelled in the bishop's court, *pro salute animæ*, an appeal lies from the sentence; because the whole power of the court arises out of the civil establishment of the church, and the very court itself is a creature of the secular authority. But the case is quite otherwise with respect to that voluntary jurisdiction which is exercised by the bishop personally without his court; which is inherent in the episcopal office and character, by the constitution of the church catholic, antecedent to all alliances between church and state.

With respect to the oath, the bishop is certainly bound by it to the archbishop as much as the priest to the bishop; as much, I say, my lords, but not more. And what is the obedience to which the oath binds either?—Not to an indefinite, unlimited, but to canonical obedience,—to no obedience beyond canonical. And I say, that a submission to the archbishop, in the exercise of my voluntary jurisdiction in my own diocese, is no part of the obedience which I owe the archbishop by virtue of my oath. But, my lords, I must observe, that the relation between the archbishop and bishop, and the relation between bishop and parish-priest, are materially different. The parish-priest derives his whole power of cure of souls from the bishop: the bishop confers it on him by institution, or, in the case of a perpetual curate, by licence; but in either case it comes from the bishop solely. But a bishop owes not a particle of his diocesan authority to the archbishop: the archbishop neither confers nor can he withhold it, although he has a limited control over it. In England, the diocesan authority is conferred by the election of the

Digitized by Google

clergy of the cathedral church: it is that election which makes the bishop of the diocese. It is true, that election is so controlled and directed by the king, as supreme head of the national church, that it seems to be little more than a mere form; for when the clergy of the cathedral are impowered to proceed to election, by the *congé d'élire*, their choice is directed to a particular person recommended by the king. In effect, therefore, it is from the king that the bishop receives his diocesan authority; the election of the clergy of the cathedral being only the form by which the king gives it: but the archbishop has no share in the giving of it. It is true, the election is followed by a proceeding in the archbishop's court, which is called the confirmation of the bishop elect: but this is not a proceeding by which the archbishop confers the diocesan authority; it is merely a revision of the proceedings in the business of the election, to see that all has been done in due form and order, without any such irregularity as would render the election *ab initio* a nullity. Inquiry is also made into the character of the bishop elect; to see that he is a person in public reputation, and, in the tenor of his life, fit to be advanced to so high a station in the church. And when it is found that all has been regularly done, and that the life and character of the bishop elect are unimpeachable, the judge of the archbishop's court pronounces that he is duly elected, —that is, duly invested with the diocesan authority. But that sentence does not invest him; it declares only that he is invested.—In another part of the United Kingdom, the bishop is invested with his diocesan authority immediately by the king's letter patent, without any previous election of the clergy of the cathedral, or any subsequent confirmation of the archbishop. In both parts of the kingdom, therefore, the bishop derives the whole of his diocesan authority—in the one both in form and effect, in the other in effect though not in form—solely from the king; not an atom of it from the archbishop. Then for our temporalities, and all our secular authorities and prerogatives, in both parts of the kingdom, we hold them solely of the crown.—Then, my lords, what part of our diocesan authority do we derive from the archbishop?—Certainly not an atom of it. We derive only from him the power of order: which is given by consecration, and can be given in no other way; no secular power can give it. But the power of order is the spiritual capacity of exercising those sacred functions which none without that power can perform. And this power of order is always described by the canonists as a distinct thing from the diocesan authority: and it is distinct, and indeed in its nature is a higher thing: Christ first gave it to the apostles; the apostles conveyed it to others; and those only who have derived it from the apostles in perpetual succession have power still to convey it. But it is so distinct from diocesan authority, that the power of order may be possessed (and in some instances is possessed) without a particle of diocesan authority; and diocesan authority might be conferred on a person not having the power of order; though such a person, without the power of order, could not perform any one of the sacred functions of a bishop. The bishop, therefore,—which is the great point that I am anxious to prove,—derives no part of his diocesan authority from the archbishop. The contentious jurisdiction in every diocese arises out of the civil establishment, and is properly subject to appeal; but the bishop of every diocese has a power, which is called the voluntary jurisdiction, which is of higher origin and earlier date than any civil establishment; which the archbishop, beyond the limits of his own proper diocese, has no right to take into his own hands; except in extraordinary cases, —namely, vacancy of a see, when it devolves to him for the time, as guardian of the spiritualities; and when, for the purpose of visiting his province, he inhibits the bishops for a short time. And I contend, that the power of appeal proposed to be given by this bill would mix the archbishop, in the ordinary jurisdiction of every diocese in his province, in the voluntary branch, in a manner in which he ought not to mix in it; and would be a violent infringement of the independence of the bishops.

But, my lords, dismissing this ground of objection, I might argue against this appeal simply from the impolicy of it; and perhaps some of your lordships may allow more weight to this argument than to the other. My lords, I say, that this appeal lays the ground of much ill-humour between the bishops and their clergy, and the archbishops and the bishops; and is likely either to defeat the purposes of the bill, or will be nugatory. If the arch-

Digitized by Google

bishop, in the exercise of the power given to him, should pin his faith upon the bishop (which is the course most likely to be taken), and say "I will not grant what the bishop has refused; I will confirm his refusals," then the appeal is nugatory. If, on the other hand, the archbishop should be very alert in the exercise of this new unconstitutional authority with which the bill improperly invests him, I think any bishop that finds himself interfered with will be apt to say to his clergy "I will have nothing more to do with this business: I will license none of you: go to the archbishop, and be may license you all, if it so please him;" and then the purpose of the bill will be pretty much defeated. — But noble lords may say "What then is your plan? Would you give every bishop a power within his diocese of licensing at his pleasure, without any check upon him in the exercise of that large discretion?" My lords, my plan would be this: I would propose to your lordships, that every bishop should be impowered to grant licences within his own diocese, in every case which should seem in his judgment entitled to the indulgence: but then he should be required to set forth in every licence the cause of granting it; and, besides, he should be obliged to transmit to the archbishop, on or before a day to be fixed by the act in every year, a report of all the licences granted by him in the year preceding; specifying not only the names of the clergy, and the names of the benefices in respect of which they shall have been granted, but the time for which each has been granted, and the causes of granting: and this report, with the addition of his own proper diocese, the archbishop should be required to transmit to the king in chancery. And this, I maintain, would be a severer check upon the bishops, in the exercise of their discretional power of dispensation, than any the bill imposes in its present shape; because it makes the acts of the bishop public and notorious. My lords, what is the security for the proper conduct of any public men in the exercise of any discretional powers with which they may be invested? What is the security for a judge's just exercise of his discretional powers? The security is this, and nothing else,—that the judge is a public man, in a great conspicuous station, and that nothing that he does is done in a corner: my lords, this is the security you have for the discretion of a judge. The very same you have for the discretion of a bishop: a bishop is a person holding a conspicuous situation in the country, high in rank, and vested with great authority; and the jealous eye of the public is upon him and upon all his actions.—But, my lords, it may be said, that cases may occur when the cause of granting cannot with propriety be set forth in the licence,—cases in which it may be fit that a licence should be granted, and yet the cause of granting may be unfit to be told. A clergyman may be disqualified for duty; or even his absence may be made a matter of necessity, by reason of some disorder which it would be cruel to divulge. Other cases may occur, hardly fit to be mentioned here. But for these cases the bill has in my judgment very wisely and properly provided. Here I consent that the archbishop should be called in,—not by way of appeal; but, as this bill calls him in, to confirm any licence granted by the bishop when the cause of granting cannot be set forth; without which confirmation, such licence should be void.—My lords, in that part of the bill which gives the bishops a summary exercise of the ecclesiastical authority, I shall request your lordships to attend carefully to the structure of the clauses, to see that they are so drawn as really to go to the effect intended. And this is all I shall say at present upon that part of the bill.

After a short conversation, the bill was committed.

Debate on the Budget.] June 13. The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Ways and Means,

Mr. Chancellor *Addington* rose to bring forward the Budget. He said, that in consistency with the assurances, which the House had given his majesty of support in the present contest, it now behoved them to make the efforts which were necessary for that purpose. We are, said he, called on to summon all our fortitude, and to put forth all our force; but, to make these efforts, we must submit to great privations, and unusual inconveniencies; to make even great and extensive sacrifices. We had an enemy to contend with who had calculated the means as well as the circumstances of our exertions. It was therefore necessary for us to be prepared, not only for a vigorous but for a protracted contest. This was a system which was not less consistent with

Digitized by Google

the calculation of the coldest prudence, than due to the fortitude and wisdom of a great and powerful people. It was upon opinions such as these, and with reference to such a system as that to which he had adverted, that he felt it his duty to propose the plan which he was now about to submit to the committee. The following were the various items of the supply:

Navy	10,021,000
Army	8,721,849
Army Extraordinaries to be voted	2,600,000
Extraordinaries of the preceding year	1,632,151
Ordnance	1,280,000
Vote of Credit	2,000,000
Corn Bounties	524,000
Miscellaneous Services	1,300,000
Total	26,879,000

Joint charges of Great Britain and Ireland.

Separate Charges for Great Britain.

Deficiency of Malt	118,842
Deficiency of Ways and Means last year	171,431
American Claims	330,000
East India Company for Expeditions	1,000,000
Exchequer Bills already voted	2,781,000
Interest on ditto	920,000
Exchequer Bills of 1796, advanced by the Bank	1,500,000
Total separate charge of Great Britain	6,821,679
Total of the Supplies	33,730,679
Two seventeenths for Ireland	3,162,235
Additional for Civil List, &c	179,224
For Ireland	3,332,459
Leaving on account of England for Supply	30,398,220

Ways and Means.

The means of providing this sum will consist of three parts. The taxes voted annually—The growing produce of the consolidated fund, and issue of Exchequer bills; and lastly, an augmentation of the duties of Excise and Customs, and a separate tax on property. The Ways and Means will be as follows:—

Land and Malt voted annually	2,750,000
Exchequer Bills	3,000,000
Surplus of the Consolidated Fund	6,500,000
Exchequer Bills on aids of 1804	1,500,000
Money in Treasury, residue of Bounties on Hemp, &c	37,782
Lottery	400,000

I now come to the Ways and Means by which I propose to raise the amount of the sum which I have stated to be necessary for the service of the year. The three great objects to which I look as the sources of this revenue are the Excise and Custom Duties, on which I intend to submit to the Committee a large augmentation; and a tax upon property. I wish it to be distinctly understood that I consider these duties as applicable to war only, and I intend to propose that they should cease within six months after the restoration of peace.

Customs.

Imports.—An increased Duty on Sugar imported, of 20 per cent on the duty now paid, and an increased duty of 12½ per cent on the duty now paid on other goods imported; with the exception of Cotton-Wool, Tea, and Wine	1,300,000
Exports.—On all Articles exported to any part of Europe, a duty of 1 per cent *ad valorem*, and, to any other part of the world, a duty of 3 per cent *ad valorem*	460,000
On Cotton-Wool exported 1 penny in the lb.	250,000
Tonnage.—An additional duty on Tonnage	150,000
	2,160,000
Deduct increase of drawbacks	160,000
Produce of Customs	2,000,000

Excise.

Tea.—An additional 15 per cent *ad valorem* on the lower sorts, and 45 per cent *ad valorem* on the higher	1,300,000
Wine.—An additional duty of 10*l.* per Pipe	500,000
Spirits.—50 per cent on the present duty on all Foreign and British Spirits	1,500,000
Malt.—Additional Duty of two Shillings a bushel	2,700,000
	6,000,000

Rents and Funds.

A Tax of 1 Shilling in the Pound on the actual rent of all land in England, to be paid by the land

Digitized by Google

owner, and 9*d.* in the Pound, to be paid by the tenant. In Scotland, the tenant to pay only 6*d.* in the pound. Besides this a tax of 5 per cent on the nett produce of all trades and professions; and also of 5 per cent upon the dividends due on the public funds, except upon such dividends as are due to Foreigners residing out of this country	4,500,000

With regard to that species of property arising from government securities, I know perfectly well the delicacy which has always been felt upon this subject, but I am sure that it will not be expected, at the present time, that that kind of property should not be called upon to bear its share in the general contribution. The question now is, not what species of property shall be exempted, but in what proportion each species shall contribute? It certainly is intended that this kind of property shall be made contributory, though it is not in every instance. I mean, however, now to propose, that all persons possessing property in the funds shall be required to make returns to commissioners by whom this bill is to be carried into execution. These commissioners will not be all of them resident in London, as under the income bill, but they will be appointed in different parts of the country. They are to have the same powers for certain purposes as the commercial commissioners. All persons having property in the funds are to lay their accounts before these commissioners; and if they do not do it before a certain day, they will be held to have made their election, in which case provision is made that they shall be charged in another way. It will be understood that no person can be charged except according to the first provisions to which I have alluded, unless it is by his own choice. If the persons do not make their returns to the commissioners at a proper time, then, and in that case only, the provisions are to be executed at the Bank. All agents for Foreigners, and persons not being British subjects, having property in the funds will be exempted: the Committee will feel that they could not with justice have been included in this impost. When I say foreigners, I mean those not resident in England. I shall now, for the sake of clearness, give a summary recapitulation of the taxes.

On the Custom Duties	2,000,000
On the Excise Duties	6,000,000
On the Land and Property	4,500,000
Making in all	12,500,000

The committee, however, must be aware, that though parliament may determine to raise so large a part of the supplies for the service of the year, yet it must be obvious, that a very considerable part of this sum cannot be raised within the present year, I will, therefore, only calculate the sum to be produced by these taxes in this year at 4,500,000*l.* there would then remain, 10,000,000*l.* to be provided for the service of the present year; this sum must be raised by way of loan, and I have this day entered into an agreement with some respectable bankers of the city of London, for a loan of 12,000,000*l.*, 10,000,000*l.* of which was for England, on the following terms:—For every 100*l.* 80*l.* 3 per cent consols, which at 58¼, the price of Saturday, would be 46*l.* 14*s.*—80*l.* reduced at the same price, 46*l.* 14*s.* The bidding was upon the long annuities; they were taken at 6*s.* 5*d.* which at 17 years and a half purchase, was 5*l.* 12*s.* 3*d.* The discount was 2*l.* 6*s.* 3*d.* which made the whole amount 101*l.* 6. 6*d.* The bonus to the contractors is therefore 1*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* and the interest to be paid by the public, 5*l.* 2*s.* 3*d.* per cent. I have to congratulate the House, that, under such circumstances, so beneficial a bargain has been made. I have now to state the means by which I propose to provide for the interest of the loan. For Great Britain, which amounts to 480,000*l.* to which add the charges for management, and one per cent for the sinking fund 190,000*l.* And the whole sum to be provided for will be 670,589*l.* This sum I propose to raise by an increase of the duties on certain articles of the customs, which I calculate will amount to 250,000*l.* The increase in consequence of the consolidation of the assessed taxes will amount to 220,000*l.* But there will still be a considerable sum wanting. The measure by which I propose to make it up is one which has often been recommended. I mean a change in the mode of collecting the receipt tax. I mean to propose, that in all cases where money is to be paid, it shall be competent for the person paying to demand a stamp from him who is paid. The price of the stamp used, it is intended, shall bear a very minute relation to the sum paid; but

Digitized by Google

that in no one instance shall it be less than 2*d.* or more than 5*s.* The produce of this regulation I estimate at 220,000*l.* Those three sources of revenue will produce 690,000*l.* applicable to the payment of the above 670,589*l.* being the amount of the interest and expenses on the loan. Having recapitulated the different heads of Supply and Ways and Means, the right hon. gentleman continued: The committee will perceive, that the great object I have in view is to raise a large part of the supplies within the year. The extent to which I wish to carry this principle is this, that there shall be no increase whatever of the public debt during the course of the war. In the first place, it will be necessary to ascertain the probable amount of the annual charges of the war, and then to make provisions for carrying on a vigorous and even protracted contest, without making any greater addition to the public debt than what will be annually liquidated by the sinking fund. The annual charge of the war, unless demands should be made upon us by the intervention of foreign powers who may wish to make a common cause with us, I think will not exceed 26,000,000*l.* I do not mean to deny, that this is an enormous sum, but not greater than the object for which we have to contend. If then the House think fit to adopt the measure I am proposing, if I am right in my estimate of the growing produce of the consolidated fund, which I have considered at six millions, and if my calculation of the annual taxes be correct, which I have estimated at 12,500,000*l.* but which for this purpose I will only take at 10,000,000*l.* there will only remain a sum of 6,000,000*l.* to be borrowed, which will be more than covered by the sinking fund which now produces considerably more than six millions. The growing produce of the consolidated fund is also likely to increase, unless we are again visited by those calamities with which the country has been afflicted. If then my calculations are correct, we shall be enabled to meet a war expenditure of 26 millions without any increase of the public debt, an object so desirable that no difference of opinion can be entertained upon the subject. I trust therefore, this system will be adopted; it is one which has been before tried, and of which the effect is known; it has inspired confidence at home and created respect abroad. But the pecuniary effect is not all, it will be a difference in another respect, the difference betwen a temporary and a permanent tax: it will have another effect also, that of convincing the enemy that it is hopeless for him to contend with our finances: it will have a still farther effect, that of convincing the other powers of Europe, that they may safely join with us in the common cause of resistance against the common enemy, for that the resources of this country are such as to give full security for the punctual discharge of any engagement it may enter into, and this is an object for which I have in view some provisions. I desire the committee to look at the mode adopted for raising the supplies for the service of the year; they will find on land a considerable duty imposed, as well as upon personal property. They will find at an early period of our history, taxes were raised within the year on all descriptions of property, descending even to the wages of servants. To illustrate this, I will refer to the times of William and Anne, when the funding system was first introduced: let it be recollected, that then not only 4*s.* in the pound on land was imposed, but also 50*s.* per cent on stock in trade, 5*s.* on all salaries, offices, perquisites or pensions: 4*s.* in the pound on all annuities and sions, and all persons of any profession were charged 4*s.* in the pound for that which was received or got by any practices, or emolument whatsoever. It is to be recollected, that these times, although they were arduous, and the object for which they were then contending was considerable, yet they were minor to the objects which we have now in view, and therefore the exertions which we now make, ought to be so much the greater. That was a great and a glorious period in the history of this country, but not so great as the present, the contest being very different; for the present contest is for the existence of this country as a free state, and the question now is, whether we shall maintain and support that existence, or whether we shall abandon the people of this land as a prey to the French? Our prospects with regard to revenue are most flattering. It has been increasing progressively from 1792 to 1803. In 1792 the permanent taxes were 14,260,000*l.* but on the 5th of April 1803, they were 15,994,000*l.* But this is not all, the permanent taxes which were imposed during the war have been productive in an equal degree. We have besides this, the benefit of the operation of that great system

Digitized by Google

that sheet anchor of this country, the system which has been long adopted for the gradual reduction of the debt, which is a capital operation for the benefit of the public, an operation which carries with it this singular advantage, that it executes its purposes for our relief in proportion to our pressure, and if the system which I am about to recommend shall be adopted, we shall not only provide for our expenditure within the year, but shall have a gradual diminution, even during the war, of the public debt. Now, I apprehend that in the support of such a system, all descriptions and classes of the community are interested. I have, therefore, thought it incumbent on me to propose such modes for raising the supplies, as are likely to be effectual, even though I know part of them will bear hard on that part of the community which I should most rejoice to spare. For the question now is (and every peasant in the country is convinced of it, as well as those of the highest rank), whether Great Britain shall continue her present power and estimation in the scale of nations, or make an item in the catalogue of the conquests of France: I have therefore a confident expectation, that all classes of the community will see the necessity of our preparing not only for a vigorous, but for a protracted war. It has been expected, whenever application is made to the liberality of parliament for large supplies, that something should be said on the conduct of government. I am aware, however, that the committee will not expect from me many declarations on this subject. I feel it a duty to make great exertion. I trust it will appear, upon a full examination of the conduct of government, that ministers have not been negligent. I will not expatiate on what ministers intend to do, but I will say generally, it is their wish to avoid extremes; to avoid any thing that may endanger our honour—not to plunge the nation into a war of extermination, nor to submit to any humiliation; to hold out that we enter into the war with reluctance, but have no fear of the issue: that ministers ask assistance, not because they wish to go to war, but because we are at war; and that we are at war because we cannot be at peace; that our object is peace on fair and honourable terms; but that we have no means of obtaining peace but by great exertions in support of war: this is the principle on which we appeal to the patriotism of parliament. We are acting on a principle of firmness, for the support of the dignity of the king and the true interests of his people; we will endeavour to maintain dignity without arrogance, and to show moderation without pusillanimity. After some farther observations, the right hon. gentleman proposed his several resolutions, which were agreed to.

The King's Message relative to the Batavian Republic.] June 17. Lord Hawkesbury presented the following Message from his Majesty.

"GEORGE *R.*

"His majesty thinks it right to inform the House of Commons, that, from an anxious desire to prevent the calamities of war being extended to the Batavian republic, he communicated to that government his disposition to respect their neutrality, provided that a similar disposition was manifested on the part of the French government, and that the French forces were forthwith withdrawn from the territories of the Batavian republic: this proposition not having been admitted by the government of France, and measures having been recently taken by them in direct violation of the independence of the Batavian republic, his majesty judged it expedient to direct his minister to leave the Hague; and he has since given orders that letters of marque and general reprisals should be issued against the Batavian republic and its subjects.

"His majesty has at all times manifested the deepest and most lively interest for the prosperity and independence of the United Provinces; he has recourse therefore to these proceedings with the most sincere regret, but the conduct of the French government has left him no alternative; and in adopting these measures, he is actuated by a sense of what is due to his own dignity, and to the security and essential interest of his dominions. G. *R.*

The King's Message relative to the Defence of the Country.] June 18. The Chancellor of the Exchequer presented the following Message from his Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His majesty thinks it proper to acquaint the House of Commons, that, for the more effectual defence and security of the United Kingdom, against the avowed designs of the enemy, and for the purpose of providing such means as may be best

Digitized by Google

calculated for a vigorous prosecution of the war, his majesty deems it important that a large additional force should be forthwith raised and assembled.

"His majesty recommends this subject to the consideration of his faithful Commons; and relies with confidence on their zeal and public spirit, that they will adopt such measures as, upon this occasion, shall appear to them to be most effectual, and for carrying the same into execution with the least possible delay. G. R."

Debate on the King's Message relative to the Defence of the Country.] June 20. The House having resolved itself into a committee on the King's Message relative to the Defence of the Country,

The *Secretary at War* said, that what he had at present to submit to the committee was, the mode proposed for raising an additional force for operations offensive, as well as defensive, against the enemy. There were two points to which the subject was reducible; first, that the force provided should be equal to an effectual and powerful defence; and, secondly, the disposable force which we should have for offensive operations. It was the duty of parliament to attend to both our naval and military defence; and that must be done with reference to the strength and resources of the enemy in various quarters from which they might have an opportunity of annoying us. Our preparations must also be made with reference, not only to the government, but to the singular character of the present governor, who disposed despotically of the immense power of France. In ordinary times, and under regular and established governments, nay even during the late war, a force of 140,000 men was deemed sufficient, with the strength of our immense navy co-operating, to enable us to look with contempt on the threats of our enemies. They would still be sufficient for home defence; for he made little doubt but the army which would attempt to invade us would be sent to the bottom of the sea before they could arrive, or be dashed to pieces by the cannon of those who would be opposed to them. When he looked to the promises made to the first consul by the different provinces of France, and by his military coadjutors, he could only smile at their audacity; at the same time, he made little doubt, from Buonaparté's character, that the attempt would be made. The officers, however, who offered themselves for this service, and wished to follow the "triumphant" banners, as they called it, of their chief, would find the passage of the British channel far more tremendous than that of the river Styx.

"Fata obstant, tristique palus inamabilis undæ
"Alligat, & novies Styx interfusa coercet."

The vengeance which the first consul meditated against this country was now clearly and distinctly traced, and nothing would ultimately satisfy him but the degradation of England, to enable him, by the destruction of the power and the interests of this country, easily to effect the slavery of Europe. The first consul possessed those properties that would never suffer him to be at rest. But however violent his animosity, ready as he professed himself to be, to sacrifice fleet after fleet, and thousands after thousands, to his views of ambition and vain glory, and however we might despise his threats, it was not the less necessary to make additional reinforcements, to convince him that his enterprise would be more perilous than he might have conceived it. In this case, what he meant to propose to the committee was, that there should be raised an army of reserve of 50,000 men, of which 34,000 should be levied in England, 10,000 in Ireland, and 6,000 in Scotland. That army of reserve would leave a disposable regular force, and place the country in a complete state of security. From our present situation, it must inevitably happen that we should have great naval success; but it must be confessed that the military system hitherto pursued was by no means proportioned to the power, strength, and the grandeur of the country. It was therefore necessary that a new system should be adopted, but that would be best resorted to in a time of quiet and tranquillity. The first consideration was, that the force proposed should be levied as speedily and be made as efficient as possible. The second was, that the army of reserve should serve, whether English, Scotch, or Irish, in any part of the united kingdom to which they may be ordered, and also the islands of the channel, such as Jersey and Guernsey. As to the arrangements, there were three points to which he wished to direct the attention of the committee. 1st, That all persons should be liable to serve, from the age of 18 to 45 years, who were to be officered by persons properly qualified from knowledge

Digitized by Google

and experience. 2ndly, That their extent of service should be Great Britain, Ireland, and the islands of the channel. And, 3rdly, that, instead of during the war, their time of service should be limited to four years. The grounds of the plan were different from those pursued in 1797; nor were the troops to be considered on the same footing with the volunteer force then raised and officered by themselves. He gave great praise to the zeal and patriotism of these corps; but their officers could not be considered so effective as men whose habits and education afforded them more knowledge and experience. We had already 72,965 militia, and officers of the description alluded to could not be found for them. The additional force of 50 battalions would would be officered from the half-pay list; where those might fail, recourse would be had to officers in the marines; in the third case, officers would be selected who had been in the service of the East India company; in the fourth case, which supposed the failure of the former classes, those officers would be chosen from the fencible regiments who served with so much distinction and honour to themselves in Ireland. The fifth resort would be, to officers in the recruiting service. He would abstain from entering into the consideration of Irish and English regiments serving indiscriminately in either country. They had already shown that no legal compulsion was necessary; and that reciprocity which he proposed of mutual defence, could not, he supposed, be liable to the smallest objection. The substitutes in both countries would have to serve, instead of five years, as heretofore, only four years; or one month after the ratification of peace. He then enumerated the proportions that should be raised by the counties and cities, comparing them with the force raised during the last and former wars, and concluded with exulting in the strength and security which the united kingdom had to rely on, upon considering that, in Great Britain and Ireland, there would be an army of 112,000 for internal defence, leaving a strong disposable force for offensive operations. Upon the whole, however, he said, it would not be more at the commencement of the present than at some periods of the last war. The burthens to be imposed would necessarily be very heavy; but they would be cheerfully borne when it was considered that it was to avoid the most horrible state of slavery and sumbission to foreign tyranny that any country had ever experienced. The arrangements then were, that all males from 18 to 45 years of age were liable to be drawn by ballot. In the plan for raising a supplementary militia, he found that peers were not exempted, and it was proposed on this occasion to follow the same rule. The exemptions were to extend only to officers in the army and navy, and those apprentices whose indentures had been executed before the 5th of June, when his majesty's message was delivered. He was firmly convinced, from the spirit already manifested, that the country would feel that these measures, with whatever inconvenience they might be attended, were no more than were necessary to carry on the war with success and glory. It was requisite to have a large disposable force to co-operate with our powerful navy. France was vulnerable at some points, to which he only wished to allude; and while we had such a disposable force, the first consul would find himself obliged, with all his blustering to look to his own preservation. His first motion would be, for an address to his majesty, thanking him for his gracious communication, and assuring him of the utmost support. He should next move for leave to bring in a bill, or bills, "to enable his Majesty more effectually to raise and assemble an Additional Military Force for the better defence and security of the United Kingdom, and for the more vigorous prosecution of the War."—The motion for the Address was agreed to *nem. con.* On the motion for leave to bring in the bill,

Mr. *Windham* said:—Sir, the right hon. gentleman has introduced this measure in a manner perfectly suitable to the solemnity of the occasion. I wish the measure itself had been equally suitable to the manner of its introduction, or to the circumstances out of which it has arisen. But, alas! it has fallen miserably short both of the occasion and of the expectation which I had allowed myself to form of it. Instead of helping us out of our difficulties, it serves only to confirm a most material part of them, and for the rest, to give us but very imperfect and inadequate assistance. This grand measure of which so much expectation has been raised, turns out, at last, to be nothing more than a mere addition to the militia, with all the evils incident to that system. In addition to 70,000 men raised

Digitized by Google

or raising according to that system upon the population of Great Britain, and of 18,000 so raised in Ireland, we are now to have 10,000 more for Ireland and 40,000 for Great Britain, making in the whole the number of 138,000, of which 18,000 (the original militia in Ireland), are to be raised by bounty in the first instance, and the rest to be raised by ballot, with the privilege of exemption from personal service, on the condition of finding a substitute. Does any man dream after this, that it is possible for Great Britain to have an army? The hope is utterly childish. The recruiting of the British army has, as every body knows, long stood still. An army not recruited must, by degrees, waste away. In spite of all the hopes, which some may indulge of transferring men hereafter by new bounties from the force thus raised to the regular army,—the army must unavoidably stand still for the present, and one may venture to say, under the influence of such a system is not likely to be again put in motion. This, therefore, is my fundamental objection to this measure, that it destroys all hope, now and hereafter, of a force truly regular,—that it completely cuts up the army. This it effects, not so much by the raising of so many men, but, by admitting the principle of substitution. That a compulsory levy cannot be made without a power of commutation of some sort or other, I am ready to allow. The grievance would be utterly intolerable. But I hoped that another mode might have been adopted, namely, that of commutation of service for a fixed fine; which fine should be paid not into the hands of the corps for the purpose of being laid out in providing a substitute, with all the effect which such an additional demand must have in raising the rate of the bounty, but should be paid to government, to be employed by them in any way they should think proper, or, if you choose to give it an appropriation, for the providing a recruit for the army. The great point is, to abolish the present competition, under which it is impossible that the army can stand; and with this view, my meaning would certainly be, not merely to abolish this competition so far as it would arise from the body now proposed to be raised, but universally for the whole of the militia, old or new. There should be no recruiting but for the army. The militia, and every force raised by ballot should consist of nothing but the balloted men, so far as they would go. To insure the service of them, as far as I could, I would impose a fine; but I would sooner leave the service incomplete, than, in order to complete it, introduce that fatal principle of substitution; wrong in a constitutional view if that were now worth attending to, but far more wrong and perfectly fatal from the effect which it must have of destroying all possibility of recruiting the army.—That it is the militia system, extended as it has been of late years and changed, as it is, in its nature and character, that has eat out the army, nobody can reasonably doubt. What is there in the condition of this country that should make it incapable of having an army in some degree, at least, proportionate to its population? That the militia system, as carried on of late, must prevent this, is perfectly obvious. What ground is there for concluding that there are any other causes, if these were removed, which must equally produce the same effect? When we say, therefore, that we can get no men for the army, the answer is that we have never fairly tried. Let the experiment be *bonâ fide* made. Abolish the competition; and in order to meet the effects of the change thus produced, put your army on that new footing, which, without being necessary for its improvement, may be necessary to maintain its numbers. The first of these measures is, to change the condition of service from life to term of years;—a measure to which I have never heard any objection that could at all be set in competition with the advantages to be expected from it. Let the army, therefore, at this moment, and not at any time of future peace, and with a view to wars that may then be future, be put upon that footing, in which, in conjunction with other changes, it may hope to be recruited as it has heretofore been, and may release us from this dreadful state of being engaged in a war, without an offensive and disposeable force.—With all the disadvantage which the very memory of the bounties heretofore given, will not fail to produce even when the bounties themselves, to this inordinate amount, shall be given no longer, I should not despair of seeing our army gradually restored, and the service again go on as it did in all former times.—It is in conformity to these views that my judgment must be regulated upon the present measure. As a levy of so many men on the principle of ballot I may submit to it,

Digitized by Google

government declaring it to be necessary. But as a ballot including the further principles of substitution, I must formally protest against it; because it tends to produce effects, which no consideration of present advantage could, perhaps, justify the incurring: but which, likewise, in my opinion, render the measure perfectly ill-calculated to meet even the present danger. I may accept the ballot for the sake of the immediate force which it will produce, however disadvantageous I may think it in various other respects: but I must at least endeavour to disarm it of its chief mischief, by recommending that the terms of exemption from service should be a fixed fine, as I would, for the same reason, extend that principle to every other part of the militia.—The great desideratum which we have to make good, the great problem which we have to propose to ourselves is, to find the means by which that natural force, which, in this as in all similar instances, is on the side of those attacked, may be so applied as to overcome the superior advantages of another kind which may be found on the side of the enemy. If the enemy could bring with him an army not more considerable than that which we should have to oppose him, great as the object is at stake, such is my confidence in the excellence of British troops, that even without those subsidiary aids, which yet it would not be right to neglect, I should feel perfectly at ease about the event. But we are to calculate upon the supposition, that the enemy may be able to land an army in this country greater either than the whole of our regular force, or at least than that part of it which could immediately be collected to oppose them. The question then is, how shall this deficiency be supplied? And here we have, as the foundation of our hopes, this leading fact, that in the case of every invaded country, but certainly of every invaded island, the physical force is always on the side of the invaded. No country probably, was ever invaded by a force superior in number, to the portion of the inhabitants of that country capable of bearing arms. It certainly will not happen to us to be so. Were the enemy to find the means of putting on shore in different parts, a body of a hundred thousand men, a supposition not likely, but by no means to be rejected as impossible, the population of this very town would yield a force that ought to make no difficulty of contending with them. There is no question therefore of the sufficiency of physical force; but, though we are abundantly satisfied of this truth, let us not overlook another truth, not less important and certain, that in the conduct of human affairs it is rarely the physical force which determines the event. If it did so, no country would ever fall a prey to invasion. Hanover would at this time be an independent country. It was not for want of inhabitants capable of bearing arms that that country yielded up without a blow, its laws, its government, its liberties, its property, to the handful of men, comparatively speaking, who marched against it under general Mortier. It is thus, in other instances. A battle is fought, a fortress is taken, and the country submits. If we have a mind to pursue this truth, in cases of a different sort,—by what means do all the governments of the earth subsist? By possessing the physical force? Quite the contrary; the physical force is always on the side of the governed. The government of every country, with all their establishments of senates and magistrates, and ministers and officers, and even with the armies which it may have at its disposal, is nothing, in point of numbers, compared with the inhabitants at large: yet thus weak in physical force, these governments are able, fortunately for the peace and happiness of the world, to hold in subjection those inhabitants, and that not only in countries where the general sentiment may be supposed to go with the government, and the submission of consequence to be voluntary, as in these happy realms, but in countries, such as that of France at this moment, where of 50 or 60 millions or more, whom Buonaparté may have at his disposal, there are not probably so many thousands who really wish him well or submit to his government on any other principle than that of fear. This truth, therefore, the jacobinism of modern times chose as the foundation of all its operations, the scope and object of which was to apply the physical force of every country to the subversion of its government.—We are in circumstances, when we must prosecute a similar inquiry for a very opposite purpose; and must endeavour to find out how the physical means of a great country may be employed, not for the overthrow of its government, but to save itself from the incursion of foreign armies. And we may venture to say, that if these means

Digitized by Google

can be gradually discovered and brought into use, the discovery will form an epoch in human affairs hardly less important, and certainly much more satisfactory, than that which was produced by the discovery above alluded to, of the art of overthrowing governments. We are now in the state of being compelled to try what can be done towards effecting this great desideratum; in which if we cannot succeed better than has been done in most of the countries in Europe, the fate of this country will hang on nothing but chance. We must form our judgment of the present measure by its tendency to carry those endeavours into effect. The general course of the proceeding, in the minds of his majesty's ministers, seems to have been this: a regular force, a force consisting of troops of the line is confessedly the best; but circumstances, and above all the urgency of the case, will not allow of this being obtained in time. Not being able therefore to obtain the best, you must get the next best. This next best is a militia, or a force raised upon the principles now proposed. There will therefore be three species of force in the country, 1st, the regulars, 2dly, the militia, and 3dly the volunteers, and other corps of that description; and these being to be taken, in point of preference, in the order in which they are here enumerated, the regulars being to be considered as better than the militia, and the militia than the volunteers,—the masculine more worthy than the feminine, and the feminine than the neuter,—you must do in this, as all persons must do in similar circumstances, you must take the second when you cannot get the first, and the third when you cannot get either of the other two.—All this so stated, is perfectly true: but in the application of this to the support of the present measure, there is a complete fallacy; for it is not what the option would be between these descriptions of force, supposing them all before us; but whether you will begin by raising that which you do not consider as best, and thereby produce a state of things in which to obtain the best shall be no longer practicable. From the language held about the comparative value of these objects, you would suppose the higher bounty given for the best force: and that it was only when hopes on that side were nearly exhausted, that you laid out your endeavours on a force confessedly less eligible. But just the contrary. You give your 15 guineas for service in the militia: and ten or five for service in the army: and then you exclaim, that you are obliged to have recourse to militia, because you can get no army. This statement, therefore, when applied thus generally, can by no means be admitted. All that can be said is, that in the mode proposed, and by a continuance of the militia system, you will, for a time, raise your men faster, and will, in the same time, produce a greater force. The question will then be, how far the superior quantity will compensate the difference of quality; and how far present advantages must be made to outweigh, in the actual circumstances, all consideration of objects, even of the highest consequence, in future.—In this view it may be necessary to say a word or two on the difference that must, for ever, subsist between troops of the line, and every other species of troops serving upon the footing of a militia. It is as little pleasant to me as to any other gentleman to be making comparisons, that can rarely be satisfactory to both parties, and to be marking perpetually to officers of the militia, that, after all their zeal, the service in which they have laboured, cannot, by the very nature of it, ever attain to all the qualities which belong to regular troops. The difference between the two services, is founded on the eternal difference that must subsist between troops, who always remain at home, and those who are placed from time to time in distant stations; between troops who have seen service, and those who, generally speaking, have not; between troops commanded by officers, who have never acted with them in difficulties and dangers, who have never shown, because they have had no opportunity of showing, their title to command by the valour which they have displayed, who can pretend to no experience, who can bring no authority from former reputation;—and troops, whose officers possess in themselves all these sources of ascendency, and all these claims to respect. There is, moreover, a sort of soldier character, arising from a thousand causes, and acquired insensibly in the course of regular service, which will easily be distinguished by discerning eyes, and will furnish in general a marked discrimination between the militia soldier, and the soldier of the line. These circumstances must of course enter into account when we are regulating our choice be-

Digitized by Google

tween the two services, and founding our measures on the mixed consideration of numbers in each, compared with their respective qualities,—However confident I may feel that our militia force will prove a most valuable part, should the enemy come, of the national defence, I can never say generally that a force of that description is to be put upon a level with that of the regular army. I have been surprised, therefore, to hear it urged, that while a certain number of men must be kept at home for the defence of the country, it was a matter of indifference whether our army to that amount was composed of militia or regulars. But is even this the only difference between regulars and militia, between a disposable and undisposable force? Though the circumstances of the war may, at one time, require a force of a certain amount to be kept within the kingdom, the next moment may set a great part of it at liberty: and is it of no consequence that its constitution should be such as to make it incapable of availing itself of that liberty? Nay, if even that should be so, and that in point of fact the power of sending it abroad was one of which no use could be made, is it indifferent whether the enemy is apprized or not of that truth, and whether he is enabled to calculate his plans upon the previous knowledge, that the force existing in the country, can, in no case, be sent against him? If the dangers which threaten us are ever to end, it must be by some change, from within or from without, which shall be made in that power which has sworn our destruction, and which, till she is destroyed herself, will never cease in her endeavours to accomplish it. And what must be the counsels, and what the situation of this country, if we are voluntarily to place ourselves in a situation, in which it shall be impossible for us to co-operate to the producing any such change, or the availing ourselves of it, if it should happen by other means? If such is our situation, or such are our ideas, there is no difficulty in predicting that we must ultimately perish.—In every view, therefore, either of what is to be looked to hereafter, or is necessary in the present moment, I must condemn a measure, of which both the immediate effect, and final tendency is, to deprive the country of a regular army. And here it may not be amiss to advert to another measure of less extent, but of the same general character, and which, as far as it goes, is a revival of that system unhappily adopted in the beginning of the last war, and of the effects of which the army has not yet recovered; namely, that of raising men for rank. Notwithstanding all the modifications introduced into it by the right hon. gentleman, the effects of it, as far as the measure extends, will be much the same as in the former instance. No prohibitions will ever restrain officers placed in those circumstances, from giving more than the regulated bounty. In fact, it is notorious that they do give more, the effect of the measure therefore, in this respect, is only to add to the competition against the army already subsisting, and to raise the rate of bounty against the other recruiting parties, against the ordinary recruiting, you may say, of the same regiment. So that it can hardly be considered as adding a man to the army.—On the other hand, if money is not to be employed in raising these men, then what are you to rely upon? Upon a hope ten times more fatal in the accomplishment of it, in my opinion, than any effect likely to result from the increase of the rate of bounty; namely, that a certain number of British officers forgetting that delicacy of sentiment, and nice sense of honour, which so peculiarly mark the character of officers in our service, and make them what they are, will become, what is called, able recruiters, that is to say, men versed and expert in the noble art of crimping, one of the most degrading employments, and most inconsistent with all upright and liberal feelings, that can well be conceived. Such is the state of the measures offered to us at last by his majesty's government, with a view of averting the dreadful dangers with which we have to struggle. If a body of men must be raised by ballot, let the numbers be confined to the mere men balloted, and let the sums paid as penalties for exemption be laid out not for completing these corps, but for augmenting the recruiting fund for the service of the army. Let the same be done for the militia universally. If government have a mind to procure substitutes, in any instance, for the old militia, let it take the providing these substitutes into its own hands, so as to see that no increase be thence made to what it should fix for the rate of bounty. Let the condition of service in the army be changed so as to make the engagement for term of years instead of for life, with such increasing

Digitized by Google

advantages held out, at the close of succeeding periods, as might be most likely to ensure a continuance of the service of the men once engaged. To these changes should be added a total abolition of drafting. In general, in this as in many other regulations that might be proposed, the maintaining, or rather the creating, an army would be my object, conceiving that even for purposes of mere defence, a small portion of truly regular troops, in conjunction with the undisciplined efforts of the country, may be set in balance against a very large proportion of troops imperfectly formed. Thus far I have been considering only, what may be called the embodied force of the country. But will this force, increase it, constitute it how you will, be sufficient? And must not a new and larger fund be resorted to, namely, that which will embrace all the strength, energy, zeal, talents, faculties mental and corporeal, of the country? If we think that we can be protected by any of the ordinary means of war, by trusting our defence to men, dressed as soldiers, and hired or compelled to defend us, bating the chances, by sea or otherwise, that may interpose to defeat the enemy's projects in the first instance, we are little less than undone. This embodied force, be it good or bad, can go but a very little way. You cannot have it, if you wait to the last moment; to call it forth beforehand, to the necessary amount, would be an evil which the state of society in this country could never endure. This evil will be felt to a fearful extent in the present measure; without, at the same time any adequate advantage, being derived from it. The whole indeed of this measure is of that sort of which the examples are so numerous, and which are calculated more for show than use. We hear often of parliamentary grounds, and in cases where parliamentary grounds would seem to be something distinct from grounds of reason and common sense. In the same manner we meet occasionally with what may be called parliamentary measures; that is to say, measures which in skilful hands will make an imposing figure in a statement, particularly when addressed to persons wholly unconversant with the subject; but will never pass upon experienced and intelligent men, and will be found utterly to fail in practice; a sort of show goods, such as will appear to a sufficient advantage in a shop window, but will never bear the eye of a dealer, and will be found wholly unfit for wear. At all events, you must have recourse to other, and more extensive means. You must prepare the country; you must put the country in a situation in which its patriotic zeal, its native courage, its various and abundant energies may have a way to operate and produce their natural effects. The general plan, which presents itself to me for that purpose, and on which a thousand others might be engrafted, according as circumstances varied, or future views developed themselves, would be instantly to distribute the country, or such parts of it as you wished immediately to prepare (for one merit, at least, of this plan is, that you may take as much or as little of it as you please) into small divisions of two or three contiguous parishes each, according to the population stationing an officer in each, with a small deposit of arms and ammunition, and whose office it should be, in concert with all the zeal, intelligence and influence which he might find in the neighbourhood, to train those who should voluntarily offer themselves, to such parts of military training as they would be alone capable of, and as are, after all, by far the most important. It would never enter into my idea, to introduce into bands of this sort any of the foppery of dress, or any distinctive dress at all; a ribband, or even a handkerchief round the arm, to distinguish those, who were receiving this instruction, from the crowd that might occasionally accompany them, is all that would be necessary. Those essential parts of military training, as they seem to be thought, a fife and a drum, the marching in rank and in file, the wheeling backwards, the eyes right and eyes left, whatever may be their value on other occasions,—a point that I do not presume to meddle with—must here, however, reluctantly, be given up. Firing at a mark; learning, indeed, to fire at all, which (thanks to the game laws) few of our peasantry are acquainted with; some instruction in the manner of cleaning arms; much instruction in the methods of lining hedges, firing from behind trees, retiring upon call, and resuming a new station, these are all the heads of discipline to which I should propose them to be exercised. It is not, indeed, very well ascertained what proportion these may bear (a very deficient one, no doubt) to the whole of what is required of soldiers; nor how far much of that which use and prejudice have taught us to

Digitized by Google

consider as essential, might be dispensed with, though possibly not without some disadvantage, even in regular armies. It is not very clear, that troops in the duke of Marlborough's time, were required in marching to move all of them the same leg at once. Much of the modern practice was introduced under the authority of the great king of Prussia, who adapted his system to his own mode of warfare,—the warfare of large armies in open countries,—and might himself possibly be aware, that many of its rules, though upon the whole desirable, were not of that importance which his less-informed imitators have since ascribed to them. The French, whose authority at this time it is not for Europe to dispute, have changed back much of what was then introduced, and have got nearer in some respects to what was the old practice, but more nearly perhaps to what was the practice in the late American war: and though with them the eternal difference between trained and untrained between regular and irregular; (what are called irregular being with them perfectly regular troops in their own kind) between veteran and disciplined soldiers and hasty levies, is perfectly understood; yet the mode of warfare introduced by them countenances much more than heretofore, the utility of such armed and partially instructed bodies, as that which I have presumed to recommend. The measure is, at least, good as far as it goes. It draws no man from his home; it puts no man in a state of painful constraint: it stops no man in his business, so as to leave his family to distress or become a charge upon the public. It has the further merit of not interfering with any thing else, so as to prevent any man from entering the army or navy, or militia, or serving the state in any other way. Expense I would have none. The pay of the officer the price of the powder consumed, the hire of the store-house for depositing the arms in cases where the parish church could not be made to serve the purpose, with such an allowance to the men, as was a mere equivalent for their lost time, these would be the whole, or nearly the whole, of the expenses incident to the plan, which certainly could not be thought objectionable on that score. So much as to its negative merits. As to its advantages, it provides for a distribution of arms whenever the time shall come; and it prepares the people in a certain degree for the use of them. It fills the country with powder and ball: and it instructs those in whose custody they are placed, to what hands, when the emergency shall call for it, they may be entrusted to the greatest advantage and with most safety. The officer aided by the leading gentlemen, by the clergymen, by the principal yeomen and others, and having continued intercourse with the lower orders, will soon be able to form a tolerable judgment of those on whom he may rely, upon such an occasion, and those, who from feebleness or otherwise are less worthy of such confidence. But the greatest, possibly, of all the advantages which I should be inclined to hope from this plan is, that most important of all preparations, the preparation of the mind. It seems to be almost the only way (I must think the most effectual) in which they will be thoroughly impressed with a conviction of the danger. The present measure will, I confess, prove a powerful instructor as far as inconvenience goes; but that is, at least, not the pleasantest way of conveying instruction. But the present measure will never instruct the people in this, that it must be on their own exertions, that they must depend for salvation. One main objection to the measure is, that its tendency is the direct reverse. In the other way, both a sense of the danger, and a knowledge of the means necessary to be employed against it, will be carried into every farm-house and every cottage. It will be the conversation of the village green, of the church porch, and what is not the least, perhaps, of the ale-house. Men will be turning their thoughts to what they can do upon the occasion, will be calling up the memory of former exploits, will be counting upon their newly acquired means and knowledge, and above all will be familiarizing their minds to the object. It is not to be told how much of military knowledge (which is nothing more than the application of common sense to situations, new indeed, but soon capable of being comprehended) will spring up under this cultivation, in situations, where apparently it was to be least expected. An officer stationed in this way, if only by promoting military conversation, will become a source of instruction by no means to be despised. Every day of exercise or walk into the fields will be a sort of clinical lecture. If the officer be an intelligent man, and has seen service, he will soon find himself surrounded by peo-

Digitized by Google

ple, who will have acquired under his instructions reasonably good military ideas, and have qualified themselves, should the occasion arise, to render them very useful assistance. This sort of armed force not confined, like the volunteers hitherto raised, to small troops in towns, and who (without disparagement be it spoken) consist for the most part of persons, who from bodily force, habits and situation of life cannot generally be expected to support the fatigues of military service. This sort of armed force, co-extensive with the active population of the country, though it cannot of itself stop the march of an army, must produce an immense effect, aided by troops of yeomanry, whose utility will be very great, in co-operation with such such resistance as we expect from forces of a different description. When we talk of the difference to armies acting in a friendly or a hostile country, we certainly do not suppose that difference to be less, because the hostile country happens to be prepared and armed. But every preparation of this sort has hitherto, by his majesty's ministers, been completely neglected. We are, for aught we know, within two months of invasion, and the measure now just brought forth, is the only measure except the calling out the militia, which they appear to have thought of. But they do, it seems, immense things in secret. True dignity shows itself in calm! Why, Sir, what these measures can be, of which the country knows nothing, it is not very easy to comprehend; and therefore one a little distrusts the nature of this calm. There are different sorts of calm. There is the calm of confident and complacent hope, and the calm of despair. The calm of men, who having passed the first agitation of danger, have settled their minds to a determined resistance to it; and the calm of those who are only tranquil, because, from ignorance or insensibility, they are wholly incredulous of its approach. I wish the hon. gentleman's calm may not be that of a wretched lodger, who, hearing a noise below, instead of manfully getting up to resist the robbers, only hides his head in the bed clothes, and hopes they may go off with their other booty without coming into his apartment.—Their secrecy too is altogether as whimsical an idea. They observe, I suppose, that Buonaparté is very secret; and judging him, as they well may, to be a great captain, they conceive, by imitating his secrecy, that they shall appear to be great captains themselves. But they forget the difference between attack and defence. A man who means to surprise his enemy, does very right to keep his intentions secret; but it is not altogether so proper on the part of him who means only not to be surprised. An officer who was about to surprise a post, by a night attack suppose, would do very well not to tell his soldiers, whither he was leading them; but it would be odd, if the officer on the other side was to say to the next in command, "I have intelligence that we shall be attacked to night; but remember this is only for yourself. Don't say a word to the guard; secrecy is the very soul of military operations."—There is another rather material difference, that Buonaparté has nothing to do but to issue his orders with a certainty that they will be punctually obeyed, whether the army like them or not, whether they are called upon to execute them at a longer or shorter notice, or whether they have any conception or not of the general purpose which they are meant to answer. But the army here to be applied to, is the people of Great Britain, who, besides that they may debate a little upon the orders which they receive, must act in a great degree from their own impulse and discretion, and who will never be brought to act at all, if they themselves are not previously made sensible of the danger.—I, for one, will not pay them so bad a compliment as to suppose that they are not fit to be trusted with this secret. I disclaim the notion, I renounce "as impious and heretical," that "damnable doctrine," that to blind the people as to their true situation, to conceal from them the reality of the danger, is the only way to keep up their courage. If this is really their state, then is the country in a deplorable way indeed: but changed as the people of this country are by a thousand causes, and under the influence of a sort of language, and policy which has prevailed for so many years, I will never believe, that they must be lulled into a false security, be exposed to all the dreadful dangers of a surprise (the effects of which no man can calculate), because, to show their danger would be to dismay them. How do we combine this with all the vaunting and high-flown compliments, which we are for ever paying them? Are they only brave; when they believe there

Digitized by Google

is no danger? I reject the imputation. Their safety depends upon their exertions; and their exertions must be stimulated, as I am confident they will be stimulated, by a sense of their danger.—In addition to those exertions which the people themselves must make, and on which must rest our chief hopes, there is much that ministers themselves ought to be diligently employed about, but to which I must suspect no attention has been given. Every officer of note and character in the country ought to be called upon for his opinion; not an opinion given in conversation, and with an obliging acquiescence, perhaps, to the presumed notions or wishes of the person he is talking to, but such as must stand in evidence against him, and on which his military judgment and credit will be at stake. Innumerable measures of precaution are likewise necessary, and which would not be the less useful, because they would be attended with no expense or distress to the country. I do not object to the present measure on account of the expense or inconvenience which attend it, great as they will be. Whatever is necessary must be done, let the hardship be what it will. But I beg that we may not invert the proposition, as many are apt to do, and suppose that whatever is burthensome and oppressive, must therefore be efficacious. I suspect the present measure to be of that character: possibly in all its parts; but unquestionably I must object to it, in that part, which goes in the first instance, and finally, as I believe, to make it impossible for us to have an army.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* defended the proposed plan, and said, that until we convinced the enemy that we were impregnable at home, a peace was on no account to be expected.

Leave was given to bring in the bill.

Debate in the Commons on the Additional Force Bill.] June 23. On the order of the day for the second reading of this bill,

Mr. *Calcraft* objected to the plan, and thought government would do better, were they to complete the regular regiments, by ballot. However highly he respected the superiority of the regular troops, he could by no means think so lightly of the militia, as Mr. Windham had done, as he recollected their gallant achievements in Egypt and Holland. He also bore ample testimony to the good discipline of the British army in general.

Mr. *Sheridan* declared, that the idea thrown out by the last speaker, of a compulsory levy of men for the regular regiments, was altogether unconstitutional; but to repel invasion, the constitution required every man to come forward in the defence of his country.

Mr. *Elliot* objected both to the composition of the force proposed, and to those who were to have the direction of it. As to the first point, he thought regular troops decidedly more advantageous than those who were levied merely for defensive operations. He considered that the system of recruiting the regular army by bounties, had never been fairly tried in this country; as it had always been counteracted, by bounties given to persons recruiting for a more limited service. He recommended an augmentation of the bounty-money, as he thought it the most desirable thing to augment, as speedily as possible, that force, which was not only the best fitted for encountering the enemy at their landing, but for offensive operations. After pressing strongly the superior advantages to be derived from regular troops, he concluded, by expressing his disapprobation at the slowness with which ministers brought forward their measures, at the present critical period.

The *Secretary at War* observed, that there were many reasons evidently flowing from our insular situation, our commercial prosperity, and our great naval force, which prevented this country from having as large a regular establishment as many others. He agreed with Mr. Sheridan, that it would be unconstitutional to raise men by ballot for the regular army; it was therefore impossible, by bounties, to raise, in a sort time, as great a number of troops of that description, as the exigency of the times might require.

Mr. *Pitt* defended the principle of the bill, which he considered the most proper expedient, to obtain the purposes intended by it. He did not consider this as merely a defensive measure, but that by enabling us to spare a greater number of our regulars, it would forward the ultimate objects of the war, by increasing our disposable force. He declared, however, that, at the present moment, the defence of the country appeared the first and most important operation; when that should be accomplished, then it must

Digitized by Google

be considered how we should best direct the spirit of the country against its implacable enemy. He yet would not say, that a mere defensive war was to be altogether despised; it was something to be safe from a power, which had conquered most of the powers of the continent, and there was no reason to fear, but that a considerable reinforcement might be obtained for the regular army, by means of the force now to be raised. It appeared to him to be essentially necessary, that a large force should be raised, as speedily as possible; and he did not know any other measure, that would be likely to be more effectual for this purpose.

Mr. *Windham* said, that notwithstanding the clear statement of Mr. Pitt, he was still unconvinced of the propriety of the measure. He did not deny, that the present bill would procure a greater number of men, in a shorter period than perhaps any other; but he would by no means allow, that the value of the men so raised, would be in proportion to their number. He neither thought the men would be equal to soldiers raised in the common way, nor would they be as well officered. If the invasion was to take place at all, it would probably take place before this force was half raised, or in any degree efficient. He thought the name of Army of Reserve, was ill applied to such a force as this, and recommended a Vendean rising *en masse*, as a better mode of repelling invasion, than the means which the present bill held forth.

Mr. *Pitt*, in explanation, said, he considered the present plan, merely as a foundation for recruiting, and as part of a general system from which the most important results might hereafter flow.

Lord *Castlereagh* replied to Mr. Windham, and defended both the militia system, and the measure now proposed. He thought it strange, that that right hon. gentleman who generally preferred regular troops so decidedly to any others, should now recommend a peasantry, armed and disciplined, like those in La Vendée.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* also defended the measure. He said it was from a similar one, the calling out the supplementary militia, that the country had been able to make those exertions last war, which decided the campaign in Egypt. He condemned the idea which had been thrown out, of fitting up our regular regiments, by a sort of conscription, which would be entirely contrary to the liberty of the subject, and the feelings of the nation.

The bill was read a second time.

Debate on the Military Service Bill.] July 18. The *Secretary at War* said, he rose to move for leave to bring in a bill for amending the act for the defence of the country, passed in the present session, and to enable his majesty more effectually to exercise his ancient prerogative in requiring the military service of his liege subjects. The bill already passed contained provisions for enabling his majesty to take such preliminary measures for ascertaining the strength and resources of the different parts of the kingdom as were necessary, with a view to further measures of internal defence. It likewise provided a compendious mode of acquiring possession of such property on the part of the public, as might be necessary; and there were provisions for indemnifying those persons who might suffer either by the preparations, or by actual invasion; but, upon mature consideration, that bill did not appear to go far enough. It was particularly defective in one point, namely, in enabling his majesty to avail himself of his ancient and undoubted prerogative, in commanding the assistance of all his subjects fit to bear arms, for the purpose of repelling the invasion of a foreign enemy. That it was the ancient prerogative of the crown, to command the services of all who were capable of bearing arms for the defence of the country, could not be doubted. The king's prerogative, with regard to those points, was laid down by Judge Blackstone. Having spoken of the ancient Saxon constitution, by which every man was compelled to three duties, namely, the "Arcium constructio, Pontium reparatio, et expeditio contra hostem," the learned writer thus proceeded—"Besides those, who, by their military tenures, were bound to perform forty days service in the field, first, the assize of arms, enacted 27 Hen. 2nd, and afterwards the statute of Winchester, under Ed. 1st, obliged every man, according to his estate and degree, to provide a determinate quantity of such arms as were then in use, in order to keep the peace; and constables were appointed in all hundreds by the latter statute, to see that such arms were provided." The same writer added "that it was usual, from time to time, for our princes to issue

Digitized by Google

commissions of array, and send into every county officers in whom they could confide, to muster and array, or set in military order, the inhabitants of every district; and the form of the commission of array was settled in parliament, so as to prevent the insertion therein of any new penal clauses; but it was also provided, that no man should be compelled to go out of the kingdom, at any rate, nor out of his shire, but in case of urgent necessity, nor should provide soldiers unless by consent of parliament." In another passage, speaking of the power of the sheriff, the same writer said—"He is also to defend his country against any of the king's enemies, when they come into the land, and for this purpose he may command all the people of his county to attend him, which is called the *posse comitatus*, or power of the county; which summons every person above fifteen years old, and under the degree of a peer, is bound to attend upon warning, under pain of fine and imprisonment." Such were the general principles of the constitution as laid down by that able lawyer. He would refer the House to one or two authorities more: by the 1st Ed. 3rd, stat. 2, ch. 5, it was enacted, that it was the king's will, no man, from thenceforth, should be charged to arm himself otherwise than he was wont in the time of his progenitors kings of England; and that no man should be compelled to go out of his shire, but where necessity required, and the sudden coming of strange enemies into the realm, and then it should be done as had been used in times past for the defence of the realm. And in the 5th Hen. 4th upon a petition of the Commons, the form of a commission of array was then settled in parliament, and of course had the effect of an act of parliament. Similar writs were directed to all the sheriffs in England. Now this being the ancient law of the realm, it might be asked, why was it necessary to call the attention of parliament at this time to any parliamentary measure? It was because the process by which the prerogative of the crown and the duty of the subject could be enforced, was so tedious as to render it in a great measure useless. The party refusing to obey the king's summons might be fined and imprisoned; but it could only be by the due course of law, a delay which would render the process nugatory. It did therefore, upon the principle and reason of the thing, with reference to the ancient exercise of the prerogative so vested in the crown, seem to be necessary to adopt some simple, decisive, and effectual measure. He apprehended he would not be required to urge the necessity of such a measure. The situation in which the country at present stood was known to every one who heard him. It was threatened by an enemy the most formidable and vindictive this country had ever had to deal with; an enemy not only threatening invasion, but making preparations for it; not only having the insolence to threaten us with contaminating our shores, but with actual subjection. True it was, our force, both by sea and land, was powerful; but when he considered that the enemy was possessed of a considerable portion of the continent of Europe; when he reflected that the powers of the continent were compelled to submit to grace the car of the first consul of France, it was not enough to rely on the force we had, great as it was. Under these circumstances, though every one must have a reliance on the skill and vigilance of our navy, we ought to have the means of overwhelming any expedition that might be directed against our shores. Though with the army we had, it was possible to line the whole coast of Great Britain and Ireland—it could not be done in such a way as to prevent the enemy from taking a temporary possession of some part of it. If they embarked 100,000 men in eight or ten different directions, then, after deducting 50,000 that might be drowned or destroyed in the passage over, or dispersed, he would suppose that 50,000 men would be able to land. These remains of the expedition would come over more or less dis-united, more or less sea-sick, and more or less provided with necessaries; and though it was probable we might give a guess where the enemy would land, yet we could not rely upon our opinion in that respect, for they might change their determination; or, from being driven out of their course, they might be disposed to throw themselves any where. Under these circumstances, the whole power of the country ought to be put in a state to be made use of in case of necessity, and after calculating on our own powerful armies, we should have a second or a third line, or legion upon legion, and army upon army, in order to fill up the regulars, and bodies of troops in the field. In case of actual invasion, the operations in the field

Digitized by Google

would be extremely active, and the conflict severe; we therefore ought not to look to the slow mode of recruiting by ballot, but should resort to the ancient law, and to those powers of the prerogative, by which the king could command all his subjects to bear arms. Let any one consider those armies which had been produced in the field by some of the wisest princes on the throne. Let us see how queen Elizabeth was supported, when she was attacked by the Spanish armada. How was that army which begirt the throne produced? By having recourse to the ancient prerogative of the crown. He would now proceed to develope the outlines of his plan. The plan divided itself into two heads; the first related to the enrolment, and assembling of the men when enrolled; and the second to the exercising and drilling them. What he proposed was, to make use, as much as possible, of the machinery of the militia, and to avail himself of the powers entrusted to the lord lieutenants and deputy lieutenants. He should recommend that the lieutenancy should meet as soon as possible, for the purpose of directing an enrolment of all men in every parish, between the ages of 17 and 55. He should divide the men comprehended in the enrolment into four classes. The first would contain all the young men between 17 and 30, who were unmarried, and without children of the age of ten years. The second, all men between 30 and 50, who were in the same predicament. Thirdly, all the men between 17 and 30, who were married and had no more than two children. And the fourth class would include all the rest. He should also propose, that the enrolment should describe the persons in the following manner, distinguishing those who were serving in the army of reserve, or in the militia, or in any of the king's forces, or in any of the volunteer corps approved of by his majesty; and also those who were serving by substitute in the militia, and for this reason, because while a person had a substitute actually serving, he could not be called upon for military services. He did not propose to distinguish those who had served by substitutes: for the militia laws said they might be called upon whenever it came to their turn; with regard to constables and peace officers, they would appear in the roll so distinguished. When he came to speak of the assembling, he should propose to exempt such persons as long as they continued in those situations. The enrolment he was desirous should proceed much in the way of making on the militia. Every man would have an opportunity of appealing, in case he was improperly described, or belonged to any other class. He meant to propose that when the deputy lieutenants ordered the lists to be made out, they should appoint a day for receiving them, which should also be the day of appeal. He proposed that the lists should be corrected in the spring and the autumn; that they should be kept in as correct a state as possible, and that the abstract of the county roll should be transmitted to the principal secretary of state, divided into the different classes, so that it should describe the number of men, and those who were entitled to exemptions. Having so provided for the enrolment, he next proposed that his majesty should have it in his power, in case of actual invasion, or the approach of an enemy's force towards our coast, to call upon the lieutenancy to assemble or embody all those persons who did not fall within the description of those whom he had mentioned, as entitled to be exempted, and to order that all those of the first class should be forthwith called out to repel the invasion, and, during the time they were assembled, should be subject to military discipline, and be sent to any part of Great Britain, into any existing corps, or any new corps, that might be raised; that the time of their service should be limited to the period of the invasion: and that as soon as the enemy were exterminated, they were to be at liberty to return home. That upon assembling, every man should be entitled to two guineas, to furnish them with necessaries, and when their services were over, and they were at liberty to return home, that over and above the usual sum allowed to the militia, they should be paid the sum of one guinea. He should also propose, that when these men were so assembled, they should take an oath of fidelity, which should extend not only to repelling foreign invasion, but to quelling any rebellion or insurrection that might exist during the time. He would now proceed to that part of the plan which related to the exercising and training. He should say, in the first place, that the constitution of this realm not only provided for enabling his majesty to call on his subjects to repel an enemy, but the wholesome institutions of our ancestors provided, that every man

Digitized by Google

should be exercised in the use of arms. We might talk of population, but if men were unaccustomed to the use of arms, and did not know how to handle a firelock for their defence, the population was weakened in proportion to their ignorance. Our ancestors were so sensible of this, that there were many instances to be found in our books of obliging persons to provide themselves with arms, and to learn the use of them. As late as the reign of Henry 8th all servants and labourers were required to practise the bow, and townships were ordered to provide butts for shooting at, and were fined if they did not. By the 33rd Henry 8th c. 9, every man under 60, not labouring under some bodily impediment, was directed to exercise the art of shooting with a bow, and fathers, governors, and masters, were ordered to have those under them instructed in the use of arms. He should highly approve of some measures being adopted, for obliging all our youth in public schools to be instructed in the use of arms, and that the military art should be part of the public education; for we lived in times when, unless a man knew the use of arms, and had the valour to employ them, neither his life, his property, his honour, or his family, could be safe. He should propose that his majesty should be enabled to direct the lord lieutenants to make preparations for exercising the young men of the first class once a week, in the different parishes. For this object, the king might order sufficient arms to be provided for such young men. These arms might be lodged in the churches, or other convenient places: and should be kept in order, at the expense of the parishes. There were other provisions in the bill he intended to submit, directing the lord lieutenants, and deputy lieutenants to appoint officers to command the men, dividing them, as much as possible, into companies of parishes; or where the parishes are two small, adding one or more. He should recommend that over every 120 men, the lord lieutenant shall appoint officers. That every person in the first class should attend once a week for the purpose of being exercised, provided the place of exercising did not exceed three miles. He should propose that persons omitting to attend, should pay a small fine, proportioned to their circumstances in life. When these men were called out, if any young man was desirous of serving in the cavalry, he should be at liberty to do so, upon his appearing equipped as a dragoon. He should also propose, that if there were volunteers in a parish, to half the amount of its population, the remainder, though not exempted from enrolment, would not be required to serve personally. He should propose to extend this plan to the whole of Great Britain. With respect to Ireland, it was not his intention to extend the measure to that country. With regard to putting arms into the people's hands, he did not deny that, in some instances, it might be dangerous; but he begged the House to consider what was the state of Europe and of this country. In such times as these, he would rather run the chance of his countrymen misemploying the arms entrusted to them, than that they should be obliged to submit to a foreign enemy. There was one point to which it was necessary he should advert, and that was the quantity of arms in the possession of private persons in this country; for though the arsenals of this country were never better supplied, yet the public arms might not be sufficient. He apprehended, that under the late Defence act, the king might require such arms to be delivered up. However, if there was any doubt, a bill could be brought in. It appeared to him, upon the whole, that this plan was simple, efficacious, and consistent with the ancient law, and if carried into execution, was calculated to give effect to that zeal and animation, by which every British bosom was inspired. He concluded with moving, "That leave be given to bring in a bill to amend and render more effectual an act, passed in the present session of parliament, entitled 'An act to 'enable his majesty more effectually to pro-'vide for the defence and security of the 'realm during the present war, and for 'indemnifying persons who may suffer in 'their property by such measures as 'may be necessary for that purpose;' and to enable his majesty more effectually and speedily to exercise his ancient and undoubted prerogative in requiring the military service of his liege subjects in case of invasion of the realm."

Mr. *Windham* said, he did not rise to oppose the measure: on the contrary, he wished it had been brought forward sooner. He wished it were possible so to vote the question, as that their decision might have a kind of retroactive force; a power of antedating the measure, and putting the country in a situation of having received the benefit of it long ago.

Digitized by Google

Of all the charges against the present ministers, the best grounded was, that by their delays and their weakness they had brought the country to a state of danger of which their preparations were far short. He repeated the charge, and he was ready at any time to enter into the question. When ministers were accused of bringing the country into danger, the first question to be considered was, whether there was a *corpus delicti*, whether the danger actually existed? As to that, he should take the admission of ministers themselves. That a design existed to invade this country, was admitted on all hands. Such a design could not exist, without implying considerable danger. It certainly was not for those, who treated, even at this time, the idea of invasion with contempt, to say that the mere intention in Buonaparté to destroy this country was in itself a circumstance of great danger. Even he, who was so branded as an alarmist, did not talk that language. He said, that invasion was formidable only if a proper sense was not entertained of its practicability and proper means were not taken to resist it. It was by this test that he wished to try the conduct of ministry. Have their preparations kept pace regularly with the preparations of the enemy? Have they by their exertions so kept a head of the danger, as that at no period it can be said to be greater than at the period preceding? or so, as that the country cannot be said to be in danger at all For let it be remembered always, that according to the principles of those with whom he was arguing, danger from invasion, and blame to the ministry, were synonimous; since invasion in itself was, as they said, a mere bugbear, and had in it nothing to be apprehended.—It was quite consolatory to think how many comfortable opinions are heard upon that subject. The only draw-back was, that they did not come from exactly the classes of people from whom one should hear them with greatest pleasure. We were told daily of the impracticability of invasion, by many eminent lawyers, many sound divines, many worthy country gentlemen, many respectable merchants, many skilful agriculturists, many very handsome women. The only persons from whom we did not hear these opinions, were our soldiers and sailors. Ask a sailor, whether with any superiority of naval force he could ensure the country against an invading army? He would tell you, that such was the uncertainty of all naval operations, such the extent of coast to be guarded, such the variety of modes in which invasion may be attempted, some in larger and some in smaller vessels, some from nearer and some from more distant points, that with all the naval superiority in the world—even with that which the hon. gentleman deprived us of at the peace of Amiens,—he could not engage that an enemy should not effect a disembarkation on various points even in considerable force. But put this same question to a landsman, to a man who perhaps never saw the sea but from Margate or Brighton, who never embarked in any thing but a bathing-machine, and he will tell you, that to talk of invading a country in the face of a superior navy was the idlest of all follies, and that as long as we had our wooden walls (he would more properly say, our wooden heads) we should never treat invasion otherwise than as a threat fit only to frighten children. The same in the case of the opposition to be made, should the enemy have effected a landing. A man who knew no more of military operations than himself or most of those whom he addressed happily did; who never saw troops but on a parade; who had never fired a gun in anger, would dispatch you twenty thousand French in a morning, as easily as captain Bobadil; but men who really knew what they were talking of, men who were at once officers, and officers who had seen service, the men on whom we must rely, and on whom we might rely, should such an emergency arise, they would tell you a different story; and, though they certainly would not speak of invasion with dismay, if proper precautions were taken, they would never consider it as a matter to be treated with contempt. He would wish that those, who were guided by authority upon this subject, would consider how many of the opinions, which they heard were entitled to the smallest consideration. For himself, he would not declare an opinion one way or another. He would not even say, whether he considered the attempt as likely to be made. He preferred to take that fact on the declaration of ministers; because, he knew, if, by any accident, such as might happen, the design were relinquished, what vapouring there would be, on the part of many, and how he and others should be told, that nothing but their own disordered imaginations could

Digitized by Google

ever have given birth to such an expectation. He took the probability of the attempt, therefore, upon the ministers' admission: and stating from that point, he begged to know, on what ground we thought the attempt was to be disposed? Was it at this time of day, after all that had been achieved and suffered, that we were warranted in holding cheap the projects of French enterprise? Did the French require to be told, that seas were deep and winds variable; that islands can only be approached by water; that if met with at sea they would be liable to be destroyed by our cruizers; with many similar truths, the knowledge of which we seemed to think was confined altogether to ourselves. For one person that had studied this question, for one memorial that was written in England, he would venture to say, that there were a hundred in France. One circumstance he must complain of, viz. the clamour raised against those, who could not partake in this security, and who warned their countrymen, in consequence, not to trust to it too implicitly. These were treated as pusillanimous men, who were foolishly frightened themselves, and were doing no small mischief by communicating their fears to others. Those who saw danger to the country, which only the exertions of the country could prevent, were not to declare its situation, were not to call for those exertions, but were to leave the country to repose in false security, till the moment should perhaps be past, when resistance would be any longer practicable. Though the House was on fire, they were not to alarm the family by any intemperate cry or knocking; but were to tap gently at the door, and whisper only, that if they did not get up they would be burnt in their beds. There were two cases in which representations of danger seemed to be unnecessary: one where the danger was of a sort to admit of nothing being done to prevent it; the other, where all that could be done, was done already. But was either of these the case of this country? Were we in circumstances in which nothing could be done, or in which every thing necessary was already doing? Ministers, indeed, would have us suppose that we were: and, when pressed upon the subject, enumerated their exploits in a manner altogether diverting. They told us, with great triumph, of the expenses they had incurred, and the inconvenience they had produced: how, in a time of profound peace, they had filled the nation with all the bustle of war: how, at a moment when nothing was to be heard but economy and saving, they had suddenly started forth into measures, the most extravagant and wasteful. They had called out the militia: they had twice augmented the army and navy. They had brought forward the Army of Reserve bill, with all the enormous expense attending it: they had lastly produced the measure at present under consideration. All these things they had done; but with all that they had done, had they done enough? And the measures, which they had taken, had they been taken in time? There was no possible reason to be assigned, why every measure that had been adopted, should not have been adopted weeks and months before. What made this so inexcusable was, that there was nothing in our situation, that ministers ought not distinctly to have foreseen. There was not a danger to which the country was exposed, that was not the natural and necessary consequence of their own measures. It was a cunning child, the proverb said, that knew its own father: and, upon the same principle, it must often be a cunning father that knew his own child. The hon. gentlemen did not seem to be endued with this power. The whole train of our present calamities and dangers was the genuine progeny of the treaty of Amiens. One might make an allegory of it and say, that the treaty of Amiens, which had been begot by Wisdom upon Folly, by Dignity upon Meanness, as you choose to call it, by Boldness upon Pusillanimity, had two daughters, War and Invasion, which in due course, the time of gestation being longer in the larger animals, it was now delivered of. Not only, therefore, ought the hon. gentlemen to have begun their preparations from the date of the king's message, but from the very moment, when they signed the treaty, which was to settle the country in the happy enjoyment of the blessings of peace. Nothing, however, could prevail upon them to do this. They resisted all admonition, reviling and calumniating all who attempted to admonish them. Latterly, the secret of this had come out. The country, it seems, is a commercial and monied country, and must not be suddenly alarmed. The hon. gentleman was afraid of his *omnium*. But he ought to have recollected, that there

Digitized by Google

was an *omnium* of another kind, the *omnium* of our laws, liberties, independence, and lives, which was likewise deserving of some consideration, and which would infallibly go, if we were thus to keep the country in ignorance of its danger, for fear of alarming the monied men. Nothing could justify the ministers, therefore, if, in a matter of this sort, where all was at stake, any thing really important was either omitted or delayed. But they had omitted and delayed not only great and important measures, in the execution of which there might be a difficulty, but innumerable other measures, about which there could have been no difficulty, and which required nothing but thought and consideration. Such were all measures of precaution and timely arrangement.—Every possibility ought to be provided for; every case duly considered; nothing omitted, which care, foresight, and able military counsel could effect. Our motto should be:

Omnia precipi, atque animo
Mecum ante peregi.———

But was that the picture of our actual state? Had not the very measure of a board of military reporters and advisers been rejected, though the effect of such a board, besides its other advantages, must have been, to restore to the service those officers, whose age alone prevented their serving us in the field, but who were certainly not on that account likely to be less valuable in counsel? Persons who might have valuable suggestions to offer for the public good, would address themselves more readily to a board of this sort, than to individuals whom they did not equally confide in, and whom they might suspect of rejecting their proposals from jealousy or partiality. The illustrious personage at the head of the army could never think it any disparagement to him, to receive the opinions of eminent officers; on matters too which it was impossible that he could have leisure to consider himself. Here, then, was one substantial instance of a measure omitted, capable of being of material importance in our present situation. But were there not others of a different description which many might suspect not to be attended to, as they ought to have been? Was nothing to be done in the way of works, by which the deficiency of our living force might be in part supplied, and the points which troops would be called upon to defend be rendered less numerous? Much of this sort, he was persuaded, was to be done. But in the midst of these omissions, there was one measure, the hon. gentleman might say, which we have amply provided for; we have given full instructions for the driving of the country! But as a measure to be relied on generally for stopping the progress of the enemy, nothing more absurd could have entered into the mind of man. In half the time that it would require to carry this driving into effect, the enemy would have passed the country, to which it was meant to apply. The next objection to the measure was, that it was utterly impracticable. In hardly any circumstances would a tract of country, adjoining to the sea, be capable of being driven, before the enemy would be at hand, to drive the drivers, and totally mar the operation. But the attempt in the meanwhile would be mischievous and fatal. The confusion it would produce would be endless. The roads would be blocked up; the passage of troops stopped; all military operations impeded: we should be run down by our own bullocks. It would be the scene described by major Sturgeon: "The drums beat in the front; the dogs barked in the rear; the oxen set up a gallop; on they came thundering upon us; and threw our whole corps into confusion." He came now to the immediate measure before them. In a constitutional view, not an objection could be made to it. As a compulsory measure, though he was not for objecting to it, because he thought it perfectly right that such compulsory means should be vested in the crown, yet he wished it not to be acted upon unnecessarily. The power might be wanted, and therefore very properly existed: it was useful too, that it should be known to exist: but if the end proposed could be accomplished by other means, it might be right, that it should not be exerted. Here his majesty's ministers seemed to be a little inconsistent. For the sake of a great and most important object, the instant creation of a regular army, when it was proposed by some gentlemen, and concurred in by him (Mr. W.) and others, that there should be a ballot for troops of the line, to serve in Europe only, and for term of years, and with the privilege of commuting the service for a fixed fine, the ministers would not hear of the proposal: now, their whole thoughts seem to run to compulsion. For his part he was far more inclined to voluntary service

Digitized by Google

than to compulsory. By this universal compulsory training, much inconvenience would be produced, where it could not be attended with any correspondent advantage. The training would be universal: every one would partake in the burthen of it; but of those who were thus trained, a portion only, and comparatively a small one, could be brought into a state convertible to any military purposes; much of what would be fashioned by this act must be formed of materials, which the hand of the potter would throw away. But there seemed to be something besides the mere constraint, and interruption of business or pleasure, which would make this necessity of training be felt as a hardship. Men, in England, had not the same feeling as Frenchmen in general had, with respect to exhibiting themselves in public; nor had those, who would view them in those exhibitions, the same feelings as the people of France, with respect to military show and parade. There was a modesty with us, which would make many who from their size or figure, or want of ease or suppleness, might be conscious of not appearing to advantage, unwilling to display themselves under the discipline of the drill; while instead of exalting and magnifying, and giving an artificial importance to such displays, there was a universal disposition in our people to depreciate and make a jest of them. These dispositions, added to the impatience which many would feel of being mixed familiarly with those, whom they were accustomed to meet upon a different footing, would, he feared, have the effect of rendering this general training disliked. He was therefore the more inclined to seek the aid of voluntary service, as far as it could be obtained. For in this mode you were sure of one advantage. The volunteers had at least one qualification, which you looked to in a soldier, namely, good will. In compulsory service, all was apt to be cold and lifeless. But here several considerations required to be attended to. It was first to be seen how these voluntary exertions were to be obtained, and afterwards what shape was to be given to them. For the obtaining such exertions, it would seem to plain men that there was but one course to be pursued in the first instance, namely, to show, that exertions were necessary. Before people betook themselves to means of defence, they commonly required to be satisfied that there was some danger against which defence was wanted. But to attempt to satisfy them of this, was, according to the phrase at present in use, to excite despondency; and accordingly every man who sought to rouse the people to what their safety required, was branded as an alarmist, and treated as little less than a traitor to his country. He could not agree, that to tell the people of their danger was to throw them into a panic in which they would be able to do nothing. On the contrary, he believed it would only animate them to new exertions. This, at least, was sure, that they would not be animated to exertions without it. And why should they? The measures necessary for defence, were not in themselves of a nature so pleasant, as that men should have recourse to them, if there was nothing particular to require their being adopted. Either therefore you must froego these measures altogether, or you must take the course, so much condemned, of appealing to men's fears, in other words, of apprizing them of their danger. And, upon this occasion, it was impossible not to remark upon the difference there was in the practice of the two nations, France and England, and upon the different ideas which the governments severally entertained of the character of the two people. In France, when the nation was in danger of invasion, and the duke of Brunswick threatened to march to Paris, the government so far from dissembling the danger, sought, by all means, to proclaim it even with a degree of exaggeration. They thought that to apprize the French people of the approach of the enemy, was the way to summon them to exertion; and the French people answered to the call. They cheerfully fell to work to fortify Montmartre near Paris, and undertook, with zeal and alacrity, whatever else the government prescribed. But the compliment paid by his majesty's ministers to the people of this country was, to suppose, that to announce to them their danger would be to frighten them out of their wits. It was said, in answer to this, that the cases were different, for that the danger in France was much more pressing: that those in France had more to fear from the march of the duke of Brunswick, than we have from the invasion with which we are now threatened. But this argument would conclude just the contrary way. If the fear of terrifying the people was the reason for not apprizing them of their

Digitized by Google

danger, the greater the danger, the less they ought to be apprized of it. The fact was, that those entrusted with the government, were bound by every tie early to possess the country with a knowledge of its situation, in order to give full and timely effect to those exertions, which would not fail to be made: at the same time, as in a matter of this sort, nothing which was capable of being otherwise provided for, ought to be left to chance, it was fit that powers, such as were now proposed, should be deposited with government, to be used by them, should the occasion require it, and to operate in the meanwhile as a stimulus to the voluntary exertions, were it to happen, that these should, in any part, prove deficient. He was, therefore, clearly of opinion, in favour of the existence of these powers, as he was, that they should be used sparingly, and only in case the voluntary exertions should not be found equal to what was expected. — It was impossible not to contrast to the slow and toilsome march of the measure now proposed, the speedy effect which might have been produced, had they adopted at once the mode of establishing small depositories of arms, in different parts, and sent down proper officers to instruct the people in firing with ball. That measure would have begun to take effect, from the very moment that the adoption of it was decided upon. All that seemed to be wanted, at the present crisis, was, to impress the people with a due sense of their danger, and then to give a right direction to the exertions which that conviction could not fail to produce. The means of the country were equal to any thing; and the disposition to employ them would never be wanting, when once the necessity was pointed out. The motives indeed were such, as had hardly ever existed in any other case, and were equally calculated to operate upon the selfish and the sordid, as upon the patriotic and the high-minded. The destruction of this country, should it once be accomplished would not be like that of any of the other countries, which have fallen under the French yoke. Other countries, when subdued, they would consider probably as part of themselves, and treat accordingly. But there was no reason for thinking, that such would be their conduct towards this country, were a case so dreadful ever to happen, as the one which would bring that question to the test. It was impossible to say what freaks of vengeance they would practise with us; they would not leave us like Flanders, or Holland, or Swisserland, or Genoa, or countries, which while they pillaged, they would seek to make productive through the same means by which they formerly flourished: after removing whatever was worth removal, delivering over the rest to general plunder, and destroying all the sources of future greatness, they would probably cast the island, as it were, to the dogs, or use it only as a place of growth for timber, and of men to man their ships. They would send us back to the woods; to the same state as we were in, when the country was first visited and conquered by their predecessors the Romans. Of what use would the island be to them? They had land enough of their own, of a better quality, and under a far better climate. They wanted neither our harbours nor our rivers. Why should the lords of the Rhine, the Meuse, the Seine, the Garonne, of all the ports of Holland, of France, and of Spain, come to England for the use of the Thames: or of the harbours of Portsmouth and Plymouth? Let no man flatter himself, therefore, that he can be saved in the general wreck; and since few, it was to be hoped, would be so foolish, even if they could be base enough, to act upon such an idea; let no man doubt of the exertions of the country, after the country should be once satisfied of the danger. This was the first step to be taken, namely, to satisfy the people that their exertions were necessary. The notion that this would produce panic, he, for one, would not admit. But if it would, so much the more necessary was it, that that panic should be produced in time, in order that it might be over, and the first agitation subsided before the crisis actually arrived. That the exertions of the people would then be great, he was the last to doubt. He could not help here lamenting the systematic pains that had long been taken to extinguish among the common people those qualities of body and mind of which we were inclined at all times to talk so boastingly, and on which we were now, it seems, to place our chief dependence. In allusion to something which he had said the other day upon that subject, an hon. gentleman had asked, whether he meant bull-baiting, and what the courage was, of turning loose animals of one species to torment and worry those of another? He would only

Digitized by Google

advert to the question so far as to say that he did not mean bull-baiting, though he did mean what many would consider as of the same sort, namely, those athletic sports and hardy contests, which heretofore made the delight of the common people, and which, in a way suited to their capacities and habits, trained them as those Gothic practices, the tilts and tournaments of old, did persons of better condition, to every generous and manly sentiment. As to the courage of bull-baiting, he could say but little for it; but might at least put it upon a level with that of a set of gentlemen, who in fancied coats, and upon prancing horses, cracking their whips, and rending the air with their shouts, were inciting forty or fifty savage animals to pursue to destruction a poor hare or fox.—Upon the whole, he thought it perfectly right, that powers such as those proposed by the act, should be vested in the executive government; but that government should not be in haste to make use of them, till it should be seen what might be hoped from exertions purely voluntary. It was likewise of great consequence that government should exert its influence to give to these voluntary exertions a right direction, without which they might prove injurious instead of useful.

Lord *Hawkesbury* contended, that this bill united as much as possible the encouragement due to the volunteer system, with that compulsion, which in some instances the right hon. gentleman was an advocate for. Wherever the number of volunteers in any district amounted to half the persons subject to be enrolled, then the bill ceased to operate. As to the general charges of supineness and want of precaution, he could only answer for ministers, that the army of this country was at present (combining quality with number) as strong as at any former period; and would soon be every way superior to what it had ever been. He agreed, that if we were base enough to let ourselves be conquered, our condition would be worse than that of other enslaved nations. France would wreak her vengeance on us for the many disgraces and defeats that she had received from us. But if London, or twenty Londons, should fall into the hands of the French, the country would be still unconquered; for while a single acre of British ground remained unsubdued, it must and would be defended.

Sir *F. Burdett* said, that if ministers really wished on this occasion to conciliate the hearts and wishes of the people, they should begin by repealing all the oppressive and unconstitutional acts of their predecessors. In that case he would answer for it, they would not fail of their object.

Mr. *Pitt* said:—I feel sincerely happy that this measure has been at length brought before the House, as it affords a prospect of that vigour which is necessary in the present conjuncture. I approve of its principle and object. I have always been of opinion that such a measure was essentially necessary, in order to put the question as to our domestic security beyond all doubt. In its structure there is nothing new to our history; in its tendency there is nothing ungrateful to our habits: it embraces the interests, it avails itself of the energies, and it promises to establish the security of the country. Its object is the safety of all. It is perfectly agreeable to the best institutions of civilized society, and has for its basis the rudiments of our constitutional history. It is obvious, that unless we make efforts adequate to the crisis in which we are placed, the country is insecure, and if those efforts cannot be effectual without compulsion, no man can entertain a doubt of the propriety of resorting to it; but I have a confident expectation that compulsion will be unnecessary. By his majesty's prerogative, he has it in his power, whenever the country is threatened with invasion, to call out all his subjects for its defence; and the object of the measure is, that the people when called out should be trained to military evolutions—should be capable of conforming to orders without confusion or delay—of collecting with celerity, and acting with decision. Such a plan is highly desirable. The training of the people, however, should be prompt. The efforts of those to be entrusted with the execution of this important duty should be unremitted, until the country shall be secure against any attacks of the enemy. The amount of our danger it would be impolitic to conceal from the people. It is quite impossible that a people should make adequate efforts to resist a danger, of the nature and extent of which they are kept in ignorance. Upon these grounds I disapprove of the outcry so often raised against my right hon. friend and others, who have

Digitized by Google

endeavoured to rouse the energies of the country, by pointing out the necessity which existed for employing those energies. Whether ministers ought sooner to have proposed this measure, is a question into which I shall not now enter. I will not stop to inquire into the time which has been already lost; but shall express my earnest hope that no time will be wasted for the future—that every instant will be actively engaged until the country be completely safe. I think that some arrangements should be made to connect the different departments of the executive authority, that upon orders issued from government to the lord lieutenants of counties, the people might be immediately set in motion; that without interfering with agriculture, the several classes might be disciplined; to attend the drill at least two days in each week; to assemble in particular places throughout the country; the limitation of distance from the residence of each man to the place of assembly to be about six miles; the time of attendance to be not less than half-a-day. The distance I propose is not more than the stout English peasantry are in the habit of going to a cricket match. These men might be disciplined by soldiers on furlough, who, on being called back to their regiment, when danger should actually reach our shores, might be enabled to bring with them a hundred sturdy recruits. With regard to the motion, I must say that it is not liable to the objection, that it would have a compulsory operation; for in fact it does not propose to resort to compulsion, if the object can be attained by voluntary offers; and I am of opinion that the purposes may be so effected. These voluntary offers may be promoted considerably by the presence of the nobility and gentry in their respective districts, and on that account I rejoice in the prospect that we are soon to separate. If voluntary offers shall not be adequate to the purpose, we must of course resort to compulsory proceedings. The dwelling of the man is the principal object to be attended to; but, in my opinion, the poorer classes should be remunerated for the time they may be engaged in discipline. In the execution of this measure I do not like the idea of waiting for the slow progress of a ballot. In those parishes where voluntary offers should not be promptly made, the compulsory levy should be promptly enforced. This compulsion, however, would not, according to my apprehension, be in any instance necessary, if the lord lieutenants of counties, with the deputies and other persons of respectability, would go round from house to house in their respective districts, and solicit the people to come forward. Much has been said of the danger of arming the people. I confess there was a time when that fear would have had some weight; but there never was a time when there could have been any fear of arming the whole people of England, and particularly under the present circumstances. I never entertained any apprehensions from a patriot army, regularly officered, according to the manner specified in this measure, however I might hesitate to permit the assemblage of a tumultuary army otherwise constituted. From an army to consist of the round bulk of the people, no man who knows the British character could have the least fear—if it even were to include the disaffected; for they would bear so small a proportion to the whole, as to be incapable of doing mischief. There was, indeed, a time when associations of traitors, systematically organized, excited an apprehension of the consequences of a sudden armament of the populace, but that time is no more, and the probability is now, as occurred in the case of the volunteers, that, if there are still any material number of disaffected, by mixing them with the loyal part of the community, the same patriotic zeal, the same submission to just authority will be soon found to pervade the whole body, and that all will be equally anxious to defend their country, or perish in the attempt.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that the present measure could not have been brought forward with propriety, until the other measures, the calling out of the supplementary militia, and the army of reserve, had been organized and in forwardness. These measures could only follow each other in succession. Government, in the mean time, had availed themselves of as many offers of voluntary service, as they could accept of, without crippling the army of reserve. He spoke in high terms of those volunteers, with whom he was best acquainted, the Irish volunteers. He then stated the object of the present bill, which was to give effect to the undoubted prerogative of the crown. The crown had now the right to call upon every liege subject in case of invasion: the present bill was to impose a duty on the people,

Digitized by Google

to receive such previous instruction in the use of arms, as alone could render that prerogative of any avail.

Mr. *Fox* said:—Sir, I shall not trouble the House at any length; more especially as the present measure will have my hearty concurrence. This is the first time I have made my appearance in the House for some weeks past; and I will state why I so absented myself. Though disapproving of the present war, I did not wish to oppose the measures necessary for carrying it on with effect. This is the first measure which I could, consistently with my own opinion, come down to support, being a measure for the defence of the country. There are two kinds of force which ought to be particularly attended to, in a country which is invaded. We ought to have a regular and well disciplined army; but are we then sure of victory? The army, like the naval department, is liable to many vicissitudes, and therefore, I should be very sorry if we had not other resources in case of any unforeseen accident. There is another species of force, and that is the militia. I will not go into a minute detail of its construction; but I have my doubts whether it is not an anomalous sort of force, partaking more of the regular army than it ought to do, for the purpose of mere defence. The militia and army of reserve, therefore I view in the same light as the regular army; and I cannot but believe, on that account, that this measure is the best calculated for the defence of the kingdom against an invading enemy. He may have a great regular army, composed of the best disciplined soldiers; he may have officers of the first talents to direct these soldiers, and to lead them on to victory; but he cannot have an armed mass of a country, who are bound by every tie to defend that country to the last drop of their blood. I am sorry to say this bill is not framed in the way I could have wished. I would have its operations to be voluntary, and not compulsory. I would not have this measure thought a burthen by any one. I would wish it to be a voluntary force, and that you should go round from house to house to know who would be willing to serve their country in the hour of danger; and that those who agree to go, should be immediately called forth, to be instructed as often as the circumstances of the case will allow. I am convinced, that there would not be five refusals in five hundred. You would then get the object of this bill; but in a way much more popular and more extensively beneficial to the country. I own, Sir, that, at the present moment, I approve the system of this bill, by which you are to get a large force; but in doing that, you ought not to wait for too much instruction? Perhaps I may be told, these are not soldiers. Be it so; I am not attempting to give you soldiers, but armed citizens; men, whose bosoms glow with the love of their country, and their connexions; and who, in defence of these, would be as ready to fight an enemy as the best disciplined soldiers in the world. I do not approve of the idea of raising the people under different classes. Why not make them consist of one class, who would voluntarily bind themselves to go? As to the danger of arming the people in general, I am convinced the present measure cannot be attended with any. Those who thought they had reason to be discontented with the government, for the many unconstitutional acts which it has been guilty of, will now, when invasion threatens them, be united as one man in defence of their country. To show confidence in them, is to draw forth zeal. If you apply to the people for voluntary efforts, you will have a large army of armed citizens ready and willing to march whenever commanded, and to whatever place, cheerfully to meet and bravely to fight the enemy. But if this bill is to operate in a similar manner to those passed for raising the regular army and the army of reserve, and as a means of recruiting those, I fear it will not be efficacious.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* felt the greatest satisfaction, at finding there was no opposition to the motion. He denied, however, that ministers had been tardy in their preparations; on the contrary, many most important steps had been taken, between the 8th of March, the date of the message, and that day: first the militia had been called out; secondly, the supplementary militia was ordered to be embodied; then followed the army of reserve; and, in addition to those acts, upwards of 60,000 volunteers had already offered; and, after all those additions to the public force, the present measure was brought forward. He considered this measure as singularly adapted to the genius and character of the people, as it was making a common cause with them, in the defence of our common country.

Digitized by Google

Leave was given, and the bill was brought in and read a first and second time.

July 22. On the question that the bill do pass,

Colonel *Craufurd* said, that although it was impossible for any man to feel more forcibly than he did, how essential to our safety it is that we should place our chief reliance on an army of regular troops under experienced officers, yet, on the other hand, no man attached greater importance than he did to the advantages that must result from the measure now under discussion. The best army in the world might be defeated; but such an army as he wished to see, backed by such a mass of irregular force as this bill was calculated to produce, must be invincible. He believed therefore that the government never had proposed, nor parliament adopted, a measure more important than this is; and if it should please God so far to crown the efforts of our navy with success as to prevent the invasion taking place until the late and present bills should have produced their full effect, and the force of the country should be arrayed; then indeed we should be in such an attitude of strength as would enable us to bid defiance to the whole world. No man could value more highly than he did the efforts of an armed people acting in co-operation and support of the regular army. In a paper which he presented to his majesty's ministers before the Army of Reserve bill was brought in, he strongly expressed his wish that the great mass of the peasantry might be prepared to take an active part in defence of the country; and therefore no man could feel more pleasure than he did in voting for a bill which was calculated to produce that effect. But exclusive of the real physical strength that we should gain by this measure, it would also be attended with moral advantages of no less magnitude. By passing this bill parliament proclaimed to the people that their country is in danger it called upon them to take up arms, and to prove to the universe that they were prepared to repel the attacks of all the enemies in the world. This bill did at last confirm the truth of that language which had been so often held in this House by a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Windham), whom he considered as entitled to the eternal gratitude of his countrymen for his patriotic efforts to awaken them to a sense of the danger which was hanging over their heads, at a time when they did not appear to be aware of it. The language of his right hon. friend had been represented as the effects of a disposition to view things in a desponding light. But at length his majesty's ministers must acknowledge, that his right hon. friend had spoken only the language of truth. Since the treaty of Amiens the French government had dared to assert, that England, single-handed, could not contend with France; and the honour of this country now required, that we should not make peace until we had made France feel that we defied her menaces. But although he was convinced that we possessed within ourselves sufficient means for maintaining such a contest, yet it could not be denied that it was an arduous one, and that it called for the utmost exertion of all our energy, improved by every means which the military art can suggest. The present bill, and that which had lately passed, would no doubt add very greatly to our security, provided it should please God to enable our navy to prevent invasion from taking place until they had had time to operate. This, however, would be a work of some time; and in the meanwhile we should be, with respect to our enemy, in a state of comparative weakness. Every measure which appeared to be best, in a purely military point of view ought then to have been adopted, without reference to other considerations; and he therefore lamented that more prompt and effectual means had not been resorted to for the immediately increasing the strength of the old regular regiments of infantry of the line. When he lately asserted it to be his opinion that the enemy might land an army of 60 or 70,000 men within a few days march of the capital, and that unless we had a large army of regular troops to oppose him, we should be in danger of seeing London fall into his hands, in answer to the first of these assertions, he had been told by his majesty's ministers and others, that he argued upon that as a probability which, in fact, could at most be considered as barely possible; that he seemed entirely to overlook the difficulties which the enemy would have to encounter, the opposition of our navy, the uncertainty of the winds the difference of the tides, and he knew not what other impediments, which made it wholly improbable that such a disembarkation should be effected. But when the

Digitized by Google

secretary at war opened to the House the present measure, it was with great satisfaction that he listened to that part of his speech, in which he urged opinions very similar to his own. Upon this he could only remark, either that the same thing said in this House by different people was very differently received, or that in the interval of a few weeks between his own speech and that of the right hon. secretary, the enemy must have made vast exertions. But whatever might be their means of attacking us, he was convinced, that when the present measure should have been effectually carried into execution, and some others which he should hereafter mention. The people ought not only to be armed, but regularly armed; and he did not think it advisable to place any reliance on private arms, amongst which there would be a great variety of calibres, all very different from that of the musket; so that when each man had exhausted the stock of ammunition which he brought with him into the field, it would be extremely difficult to supply them. Besides which, these private arms would be without that weapon (the bayonet), with which, when it was possible to use it, the English troops had so often shown themselves to be superior to the enemy. It appeared to him, from what had fallen from ministers, that in carrying this bill into execution, it was intended to confine its operation to the men of the first class only. To this he objected: for even admitting that an aggregate number equal to the whole of that class might be ultimately sufficient, yet in certain parts of the country, it would be necessary to arm a much larger number than the first class. It must be admitted by every body, that it was desirable to attack the enemy in the first moment of his disembarkation; but it was impossible to make any distribution of our regular forces which should ensure our being able to do it with effect. If, however, 10 or 12,000 French troops should arrive on a part of the coast where we could only bring 4 or 5,000 men to oppose them, we should with such a force have a very good chance of driving them into the sea, if immediately assisted by a great mass of the peasantry of the adjacent district. Should it be found impossible to procure in time a sufficiency of fire arms for more than the first class, he should recommend to supply the deficiency by a distribution of pikes, a weapon which, on some occasions, had been used with great vigour by the deluded peasantry of the sister kingdom. In forming pike corps, the principle of volunteering might be advantageously applied; it might be made to be considered as a matter of honourable distinction for the youth of the country to volunteer entering into corps, the choice of which would be deemed to amount to a pledge that they would fairly charge and close with the enemy; that being the only mode in which they could employ the weapon which they had voluntarily made choice of. And if they really did resolve to close with the enemy, and were not improperly exposed till they had an opportunity of doing so, he was convinced that they might be employed with great effect. But although the present measure, if properly executed, might ensure our ultimate security, yet it was our duty to guard against tempory disasters of any magnitude; and, however unpopular the opinion might be, he would again assert that, if the enemy should succeed in landing an army of 70,000 men, we should still be in danger of having the fate of the capital decided for a time by the loss of one great battle. Setting entirely out of the question the calculation of the consequences, he felt it so disgraceful that this powerful nation should have to calculate the chances of its capital falling into the hands of the enemy, that this motive alone was quite enough to make us feel it our duty to persevere in our preparations for its defence, until we could say to ourselves, "We have done all that the military art can suggest: we will now put our trust in God, and in the exertions of our own strength and courage." Of this state of preparation we were still far short; for if the enemy should land such a force as he had mentioned within the narrow seas, the only means which we could safely rely on for preventing their reaching the capital were a numerous regular army, and a judicious system of fortification; and in neither of these branches of our defence were we doing enough to satisfy him. With respect to the first, the importance which he attached to increasing the infantry of the line, in preference to the militia, or any other description of force, did not proceed from any disposition to undervalue the merits of the latter; nor did he believe that, in his partiality for the former, he was at all blinded by the prejudices of education. He gave the militia

Digitized by Google

full credit for the zeal, the patriotism, and the courage, which as Englishmen they could not fail to possess; but it was impossible they should be equal to the regular troops; and he would ask the hon. baronet (sir W. Erskine), who differed with him upon this subject, whether any military man, in attacking 50,000 French troops, could possibly feel the same confidence in an army composed of two-thirds militia and one-third regulars, as he would feel if it consisted of one-third of the former, and two-thirds of the latter. Under this impression, he was desirous that all the old regiments of the line should be immediately filled up to as great an extent as they could be carried to without rendering them unmanageble. Some of these regiments were very weak; yet every one of them contained a foundation of all that constitutes the excellence of an army. Upon this excellent foundation he should wish to see a great increase of force established. He therefore recommended, in the first instance, the measure of recruiting from the militia; and if the militia colonels, yielding to the necessity of our present situation, should be disposed to make a generous sacrifice of all private feelings, he thought that the experience of what had happened in the last war warranted the hope, that we should, in a short time, procure 20,000 volunteers from the militia for the regular regiments. These men being in a great degree ready trained to the use of arms, he would incorporate into the 50 or 60 regiments now in Great Britain and Ireland, in such proportions as to equalise their strength; and upon the same stock he would engraft the army of reserve, so as to carry each regiment to the amount of 14 or 1500 men. By these means we should form an army possessing all the qualities of veteran troops, in a much shorter time than it could possibly be accomplished upon any other system. As to the consequences of that event, he would never attempt to calculate what they might be: he had never said, that if London was lost, England was conquered; but he had said, and he would repeat it, that if London was lost, England would be in the most disastrous situation that ever a country was placed in without being conquered. In contemplating the possibility of such an event, he should say, that if we did not take every practicable precaution to prevent it, if we did not improve to the utmost all those means which God had put into our hands of defending and securing those blessings which he had so bountifully bestowed upon this country, we should be guilty, not merely of culpable neglect, but of absolute impiety. But even supposing that the regular army was augmented in the way he had recommended, still he should think that we had not done enough. In the art of fortification great additional resources were to be found, whether for the obstruction of invasion, or for preventing the capital and other important points of the country from falling for a time into the enemy's hands, even in case of the army having suffered a defeat; and in this most important branch of every defensive system we were extremely deficient. He was well aware that the perfect execution of such a system was a work of time; but he would pledge himself to prove, that, even during the time that would be requisite for giving full effect to the present measure, and to that for raising the army of reserve, we might, without interfering with either of these operations, erect such fortifications as would add greatly to our strength and security. But in order to accomplish this, they must be set about, not in the usual routine of the ordnance department, but as a great and most important national work, undertaken with all the powers which the country is capable of exerting on an occasion in which its welfare and security were so deeply involved. His majesty should be empowered to command the services of whatever number of people might be necessary for the accomplishment of this great object, even though it should for a time interfere with our manufactures, or other ordinary occupations. He knew that in this country there existed a sort of prejudice against fortifications: the people had long been in the habit of looking for security against invasion, to the advantages of our natural frontier: hitherto we had most fortunately escaped the danger of this exaggerated confidence in our naval defence; but, that we had so escaped, was to be attributed to our never before having had to contend with such an enemy as we are now engaged with. There were four grand objects which, for the present, we ought principally to have in view in the erection of works: 1st, To secure our naval and military arsenals; 2dly, To increase the difficulties of landing within the narrow seas: 3dly, To obstruct the enemy's progress towards

Digitized by Google

London; and, 4thly, To defend the environs of the capital itself. With respect to the first, it was notorious that our principal depot of military stores was wholly undefended; and although our naval arsenals were in such a state that they could not be carried by assault, yet they were still exposed to the effects of a bombardment; and it would be easy to throw up works which would make it impossible for the enemy to construct batteries near enough to bombard them without previously making themselves masters of these advanced works by operations, which he did not conceive they would have time to accomplish. With respect to the second object, the defence of the coasts, he was well aware that it was impossible to fortify the whole of the coast of Great Britain and Ireland in such a manner as to prevent the enemy landing; but he could never agree with those who maintained, that because we cannot defend the whole of our coast, we are not to attempt the defence of any part of it: he could never subscribe to the extraordinary doctrine, that the frontier possessing greater natural advantages than any other in Europe, should be the only one incapable of being strengthened by the exertions of art. Within the time requisite for carrying into effect the present bill, and that for raising the army of reserve, we might fortify the coast from Yarmouth Roads to the Downs inclusive, in such a manner as to leave us little or no room for apprehension in that quarter, provided the thing was undertaken, as he had said before, not as a little ordnance job, but as a great and important national work. This was a strong assertion, but it was one by which he would abide. He spoke from some knowledge of a profession which he had assiduously studied; and he flattered himself he should gain credit for having studied it with some success, when he said, that the marquis Cornwallis had proposed making him his quarter-master general in Ireland, at a time when he was one of the youngest lieutenant colonels in the army. If the measure which he proposed was practicable, the effect of it, would be to deprive the enemy of a great part of the advantages which he derived from the possession of the ports of Flanders and Holland. He could hardly suppose that armaments issuing from these ports should be able to pass through the straits of Dover, and effect a landing on our southern coast, in co-operation with those proceeding from the ports of France in the Channel; and therefore the former, if equally shut out from that part of our eastern coast immediately opposite to their own, would be obliged to make for some more distant point to the northward of the Humber. This would oblige them to employ vessels of a larger size; and they would scarcely find an harbour nearer than Leith fit for the reception of such an armament. At all events, the attack from Holland would by this means be thrown to a great distance from the capital, and the two wings of the enemy's army would thus be prevented from acting in immediate co-operation with each other. The attack upon that part of our coast which is situated nearest to London, and within the narrow seas, would then be reduced to the armaments issuing from the French ports in the channel; which being in general tide harbours, are much less favourable for a great operation, and more easily watched by our naval force. He was by no means prepared to admit that it would be impossible to extend with effect this system of coast fortification from Yarmouth to Portsmouth: but supposing that to be impossible, it would be absurd to argue, that because we cannot secure the whole of the most vulnerable parts of our coast, it would therefore be useless to fortify any part. He should now proceed to state a few general hints on the third head, viz. that of impeding the enemy's progress towards the capital. From the different places at which a considerable disembarkation might be effected within the narrow seas, there were a certain number of great roads or lines of operation by which the enemy might advance to London. As these roads approached the centre, they of course united into a smaller number, and drew nearer to each other. What he proposed therefore was, that a line of defence should be marked out crossing all these great approaches in the situations the most advantageous for fighting great and decisive battles; that the principle positions which it might eventually become necessary to occupy upon this line of defence should be minutely reconnoitred; that the shortest military communication should be prepared behind the line, from one of these positions to the other, so as to enable our army to manœuvre behind the line with more rapidity than the enemy could do in front of it; and that two or three com-

Digitized by Google

manding points of each position, as well as some intermediate spots between the great positions, should be fortified by compact works, such as could not be carried by assault. Accurate plans should be drawn of every one of these positions, upon which should be marked not only all the works previously erected, but also all such as it would be adviseable to add in case of actual invasion; and they should even go so far as to describe exactly what hedges were to be left standing for defences, and what others should be cut down for the purpose of giving scope for the cavalry to act. That such works as he had mentioned were not now in existence was notorious: whether such plans had been drawn he could not pretend to say; but as when the enemy landed, it would require the co-operation of a great number of persons to complete these positions, he thought it would be advisable to communicate copies of these plans to a much greater number of persons than he believed to be at present in possession of them. The effect of this fortified line of defence would be, that it would check the enemy long enough to enable us to bring the mass of our force to act against him in front of London.—With respect to the fourth head, viz. the fortification of the immediate environs of London itself, he would not take up the time of the House by entering into details upon that subject; but would very willingly undertake to prove, in another place, that if great means were employed, it might be effected in a manner from which the most important advantages would be derived.—He could not conclude without noticing what had a few nights ago been suggested by Mr. Windham, respecting the establishment of a military council. In expressing his conviction that the greatest benefit might be expected from such an establishment, he felt that he should be wanting in gratitude, and in the respect which was so justly due to the illustrious commander in chief, if he did not acknowledge, that in his administration of the army he had rendered the most important services to his country. His staff, too, was composed of many excellent officers; but they were all so much occupied by a constant pressure of official business, that they could not possibly have time to digest a great system for the defence of the country, as completely as it might be expected to be done by a military council, composed of able and experienced men, who would be at liberty to devote the whole of their time to it. It was well known what advantages France had derived from a council of this sort, consisting of Carnot, la Fitte, and other scientific men. He hoped that the different topics which he had felt it his duty to press upon the attention of ministers would be seriously considered, and that they would leave nothing undone which could add to the security of the country.

The *Secretary at War* said, that he perfectly agreed with the hon. colonel in most, but not all of his observations, and lamented that so little attention was paid in this country to the art of fortification; though, since the year 1796 or 1797, great improvements had been made upon that system, and he hoped would be continued. He then proceeded to describe the constitution of the quarter-master general's office, which he said was so distributed as to embrace every thing connected with the military service. If the hon. officer went to that office, he would find that there were departments in it where all plans of the nature he alluded to were minutely drawn out and accurately considered; and that inquiry would, perhaps, have saved the hon. officer the trouble of giving the House such an able military lecture. He agreed with him, that the French were very well acquainted with this country; but by no means so well as with other countries of Europe, and very little, as it appeared, with the character of the people. The hon. gentleman advised to fortify London; he, on the contrary would say, "You ought not to fortify London." When we had a fleet, containing 80,000 men, and such an army as never before was heard of in this country, it would be a libel on the people to think of fortifying their metropolis. Before they talked of fortifying London, they ought to wait till some of the enemies' boats actually made their appearance in our roads; though he did not absolutely deny the possibility, or practicability, of their coming over in considerable force. But as to the effect of such an attempt, though he sincerely esteemed the high professional abilities of the hon. officer, he did not know that, in the English service, he had ever been engaged in any combined operations of the army and navy, so as to give him any superior means of judging of the dangers of debarkations. There were three reasons why he should

Digitized by Google

not attempt to follow the arguments of the hon. gentlemen: 1st, because not being a military man, he was not able to do it; 2nd, because the hon. officer did not disapprove of the bill; and 3rd, because he approved of many of his observations. Though discussions of this kind were not very usual in parliament, he would make some allowances for them at a time when men's minds were so much occupied by such subjects; but he must remind the hon. gentleman, that there had been many other great military officers, who abstained always from such discussions, as thinking them better subjects for representation to the executive government, than for parliamentary lectures; and the more so, as in that House they could have no practical effect whatever. He then contended that several parts of the former speech went upon misconceptions; that there was a depôt in the quarter-master general's office for the preserving and examining of memoirs and military plans, &c. He still insisted that quiet times were the fittest for making changes, and not when the hostile armies were, as it were, drawn up in the face of each other.

Mr. *Pitt* said:—Much, Sir, of what has fallen from the gallant officer is entitled to great attention, and entirely meets my approbation; but I must observe, that these considerations are not now for the first time introduced. With regard to the best means of national defence, though much may remain to be done, yet government is not without ample information upon this subject. There is hardly one military district in the kingdom, of which the government have not at this moment in its possession ample memorials, prepared a considerable time before the termination of the late war, under the auspices of the illustrious commander-in-chief, containing a minute statement of the various points of resistance which are to be found on the coasts, and all the intermediate points of military defence between the different coasts and the capital. Ministers, I know, have now in their possession similar reports with regard to those counties which contain the great naval arsenals of the kingdom. They have also memorials upon the very subject alluded to by the hon. officer, that of protecting the mouths of our harbours, and particularly that of the mouth of the Humber; and, what I think of more importance still, though more remote, I mean the defence of Newcastle, which from its connexion with the wants of the capital, is obviously of such importance that it cannot be necessary to enlarge upon it. It is hardly necessary to recall to the recollection of the House, the names of the gallant officers who had the commands of the different districts in the last war. We had the advantage of the talents of sir Charles Grey, who commanded in the north. In the southern districts we had the advantage, of all the suggestions of the duke of Richmond. Besides these officers, we had general Dundas, who, from, his situation, had the means of extending his views over all the districts. During a period of the war also, the marquis Cornwallis had the command. Having the benefit of such assistance, it is impossible to suppose that we had not at that time a great mass of military information. I have already admitted, that although much has been done, still much material improvement may be ingrafted upon those plans which have been already procured. I hope and trust that ministers will not stop short until they have arranged a scheme of national safety, that shall for ever set at rest the vaunts of a foe whose ambition knows no limits. I am ready to admit that our regular army is not quite so great as we could wish, but we have provided means for augmenting it to a degree much greater than was ever known; and in addition to all this, we are now providing an immense irregular force. As far, therefore, as relates to the description and to the extent of our force, parliament has provided means, which to the hon. officer himself (honourably cautious, and anxious as he is for the safety of his country), appear sufficient to place this country in a state of absolute safety. Much, however, as I rejoice in seeing that object attained, and much as I am inclined to attend to the knowledge and experience of the hon. officer whose plan it was to take the militia at once into the regulars, I cannot bring my mind to concur in the idea which he has suggested for the attainment of that object; I cannot think of so deranging our immediate system of defence, if there were no other objections to it: I cannot think of breaking in upon the spirit of the militia as it now stands, for the purpose of transferring them into the regular army. I know that the privates in the militia feel, in common with the rest of their countrymen, the value of the sacred

Digitized by Google

object for which they are to contend; that they are anxious to have an opportunity of showing that they would not give place to any other troops in his majesty's service in the ardour of their devotion to their country; but I know, at the same time, it is impossible to divest men of feelings, and motives by which they have been long actuated; and I know, that if a measure of this kind were adopted, from the partiality and affection which the officers bear towards the men whom they have trained, and have long had under their command, they would suffer much mutual regret in being separated. I should be sorry if there was one militia officer who did not feel proud in having his troops complete, and making his corps vie with the best disciplined troops in his majesty's service. As such, then, are their feelings, in the same proportion must be their reluctance to see those men transferred from their officers into other regiments. I think I may venture to assert, that if you take a number of Englishmen under the command of proper officers and with a proper degree of discipline, they must and will, especially when under the superintendence of regular generals, and mixed with regular troops, furnish for the present occasion a force so great, so respectable, and so useful, that it would be very unwise to hazard the making it less so, either by reducing their number, or by wounding their feelings; by making them think worse of themselves by your showing that you thought worse of them; by making an invidious comparison between different kinds of troops; and by creating that worst of all feelings, a rivalship tinctured with animosity. The hon. officer, however, not only wishes for this strong measure, but calls upon the militia officers to give their aid in transferring over to regiments of the line, those men on whose discipline they had bestowed so much pains. This is a sacrifice that can hardly be expected; but even if it could, there are other arguments against the adoption of this plan. In the first place, the danger is immediate, and the measure now proposed is one that must take up some time in its operation, and during that time the discipline of the corps must be necessarily loosened; and, therefore, I very much doubt whether, in such a pressing danger, the remedy suggested could be with safety adopted. The measures which have lately been adopted by parliament, have, in my mind, taken off much of the weight of the arguments which have been drawn from the necessity of augmenting the army of the line, by transferring the militia into it; because, means have already been taken for increasing the army of the line very considerably, by means less grating to the feelings of individuals than that now proposed. By placing a large proportion of the 40,000 men that are to be raised as the army of reserve in Great Britain, with regiments of the line, by permitting such of them as think proper, to enter into the regulars for general service, parliament has done much to increase the regular army, and to preclude them from the necessity of adopting the hazardous experiment which the hon. officer recommends. I believe it is universally admitted, that new recruits poured into an old corps which has a number of experienced officers, will much sooner acquire a knowledge of discipline and become good soldiers, than they will if they are left in a corps by themselves, whatever pains may be taken in their instruction. Taking that as an established point, I was, therefore, surprised when I heard the secretary at war, instead of proposing to diffuse the 40,000 men of the army of reserve over the thirty-nine or forty battalions that are in England, talk of dividing them among thirteen battalions, by which means all the advantage which they would derive from the instruction of a great number of old and experienced officers would be very much diminished. Our situation, in point of security, will certainly be improved by the adoption of the measure which is now before us; but it must be recollected, that while it improves, it alters our situation: if we had voted only the army of reserve, undoubtedly it might be filled with able and experienced officers from the half pay list; but we must recollect, that in addition to the army of reserve, we have voted an army of between 3 and 400,000 men. That we shall have no difficulty in procuring the men who are to compose this force, I am perfectly satisfied, because the spirit of the country is now roused in the capital, and will from thence rapidly pervade the extremities of the empire; but we shall want the means of preparing and drilling them, with accuracy. Does it not then occur to the House that we shall have infinitely more use for the services of officers not attached to regiments? that in addition to the noblemen, the gentry, and the yeomanry of the

Digitized by Google

country, many of whom will serve as officers, it would be advisable, to every three or four officers of this description, to add one or two from the half-pay list?—There was not, Sir, any opinion delivered by the hon. officer which I heard with more pleasure than those which related to the propriety of having recourse to field fortification on the present occasion, of taking the necessary measures to secure our naval arsenals from a bombardment, even from the greatest possible distance. As to the propriety of erecting fortifications upon some parts of our coasts, I know well, the general prejudice which prevails; I know very well that when such a proposition is made, the answer is; What will you build a wall round the whole island? No, Sir, that was not the proposition made by the hon. officer. He spoke only of the propriety of fortifying particular places or the mouths of great rivers, such as the Humber; and I perfectly concur with him. I see the propriety, and even the necessity, of partial fortifications of this kind. By the adoption of the plan, you would be able, in the first instance, to oppose the landing of the enemy, and, if he should effect a landing, to meet him immediately. But which we should manage and spare by every precaution that human foresight can inspire. The third object to which the hon. officer alluded, was that of employing fortification on the lines of internal defence. This rests upon a principle so plain, that though it requires military knowledge to state it distinctly yet it only requires the plainest common sense to see the advantage that must result from it; it is as clear as any demonstration in mathematics. If then this plan does promise such advantages, I am sure I shall not hear any objections started on the ground of expense. But it is said, we ought not to fortify London because our ancestors did not fortify it. Why, Sir, that is no argument, unless you can show me that our ancestors were in the same situation that we are. We might as well be told that, because our ancestors fought with arrows and with lances, we ought to use them now, and that we ought to consider shields and corslets as affording a secure defence against musketry and artillery. If the fortification of the capital can add to the security of the country, I think it ought to be done. If by the erection of works such as I am recommending, you can delay the progress of the enemy for three days, it may make the difference between the safety and the destruction of the capital. It will not, I admit, make a difference between the conquest and the independence of the country, for that will not depend upon one nor upon ten battles; but it may make the difference between the loss of thousands of lives, with misery, havoc, and desolation, spread over the country on the one hand—or, on the other, of frustrating the efforts of confounding the exertions, and of chastising the insolence of the enemy.—If then I am right in my general view of this subject, the expense and the time of constructing these works are so diminished, that, late as it is, there is nothing that ought to prevent us from now making the attempt. It is well known that in the course of last war a detailed plan was prepared, resembling in many particulars the plan recommended by the hon. officer. A plan was, I say, completely digested, a survey taken, and the works actually traced by that able officer, general Dundas. This plan is not therefore new to military men, it is not new to the king's councils, it is not founded upon any want of confidence in our army, our navy, or ourselves; it does not arise from any apprehensions of the enemy, but it is founded upon this principle—that while we set no limits to the exertions of the people, we ought to omit no opportunity of shortening the contest, and of preventing that havoc which must attend a lengthened contest, even though it may end most successfully for this country. Englishmen must look to this as a species of contest from which, by the extraordinary favour of Divine Providence, we have been for a series of years exempted. If we are at length called upon to take our share in it, we must meet it with gratitude for the exemptions we have hitherto enjoyed, and a firm determination to support it with courage and resolution

The bill was then passed.

Debate in the Commons on the Property Duty Bill.] July 5. On the order of the day for going into a committee on this bill being read,

Mr. Alderman *Combe* said, he conceived himself bound to oppose the bill from the instructions he had received from his constituents; who considered it a measure so unjust in its principle, and partial in its operation, that no modification of it could remove their objections. He con-

Digitized by Google

sidered this tax as merely an income tax, which he had always opposed, because it raised an equal sum upon incomes of unequal duration; upon the precarious produce of industry; and upon permanent income.

The *Lord Mayor* had also been instructed to oppose it, but considered himself at liberty to act according to the dictates of his conscience. He should however, watch the progress of the bill with great attention.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he never considered the old income tax as any thing but a war tax: there was this difference, however, between that and the present, namely, that the proportion now demanded was not so large, and that in incomes from land or interest of money, no particular disclosure was required. As there has been already such considerable sums raised upon consumption, it was but fair that property itself should be taxed, or otherwise it would be impossible to carry into execution the resolution of the House, for raising within the year a considerable part of the expenses of the year.

Mr. *W. Smith* objected to the tax, principally on the ground, that it was in reality an income tax, and not a tax upon property; considering it in that light, he thought it unjust, that a precarious income, derived from great mental or bodily labour, should pay an equal tax with an income which was permanent, and obtained without exertion.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that the income tax was not more unequal than every other species of tax. As to the principle that had been suggested, of making a distinction between incomes of a precarious and of a more permanent nature, this was a distinction which the legislature had never recognized in any case. The land tax, poor-rates, &c. had been always raised from the produce of the land, without considering the tenure.

Mr. *Erskine* was ready to support the present tax, not that he approved of it in principle, but because he was convinced of the necessity of making great exertions at so perilous a moment as the present. He felt it necessary, that great sacrifices should be made, and although he felt that his own professional income was not worth above two years purchase, he would gladly give up any part of it that could be asked, for the general service of the country.

The bill was recommitted.

July 18. The order of the day for the further consideration of the report of the committee on the said bill being read,

Mr. *W. Smith* entered at length into the principle and provisions of the bill. He was of opinion that the funds ought to be taxed in a larger proportion than land, because the latter was subject to many burthens from which the former was exempted. As to the tax on trade, his grand objection was, that if the tax were to be levied at all, it should be equally collected, and that appeared to him impossible, unless by the establishment of an inquisition, which would be much more intolerable than any tax. Could any man who felt the pride of independence endure such a measure? It was such an outrage upon the popular opinion, as a prudent minister ought to have avoided. If the tax, however, was to be persisted in, equality of payment was desirable, but how was that to be obtained? — By disclosures which could not be enforced, but by a violation of every principle of freedom. It had been stated, that without this measure no means could be devised of imposing a fair contribution suited to the circumstances of men; but it was a mistake to suppose that this was such a contribution as he described. It would press upon the trading community very little indeed; for they would remunerate themselves by increased profits for any burthens imposed upon them.

Mr. *Pitt* defended the old income tax. It was, he said, adopted at a time when the gloom of despondency hung over the minds of the most firm, and when fear and apprehension was to be found among the most loyal. Then that gloom and that fear considerably obstructed the progress of a measure, which, it was said, would increase the gloom and destroy the spirit of the country. But what were the consequences of this much abused measure? Why, that subsequently to its adoption the spirit of the country grew up with rapidity and vigour, its triumphs extended, its good fortune, as it were, revived.—With respect to the provisions of the bill, there were many of which he strongly disapproved. The modes of disposing of capital should not be interfered with, through the operation of a partial tax, tending to encourage the application of that capital to one mode in preference to another. Those modes were various. One man likes to employ his capital in a business which requires great labour, and

Digitized by Google

from which he looks for proportionate profits; another seeks to derive profits from his capital in great risks; and a third chooses to indulge in idleness, and to enjoy a small profit in security. Of the latter, some resort to the funds, and others to land. Any attempt to meddle, by a legislative measure, with this, the usual and spontaneous distribution of property, would be highly unjust, and tend to violate the very character of an income tax. The great mass of property to be found in this country should be left to find its own level. If taxes are to be levied, they should be accommodated to the present state of property, which should in no case be disturbed. Every man had, to be sure, the right of disposing of his capital as he pleased. But, in a country like this, it would be unwise to encourage any man, by a partial tax, to give his capital, a particular direction; yet such was the tendency of certain clauses, which he hoped would be corrected in the committee. The tax upon income should, according to its principle, be universal, and no man should be suffered to escape its operation, but under certain circumstances, not to include the exemption, or unequal taxation, of any particular class of proprietors.—His objections to the bill referred to the principle of the abatements on small incomes, in which land proprietors occupy their own property, and small annuities in the funds were most unequally treated (the latter, in fact, involving little short of a breach of public faith), and those too of that class of persons who were really entitled to compassion. It was proposed in the bill to make various abatements to persons having annual revenue not exceeding 150*l.* and all under 60*l.* a year to be entirely discharged from the tax. From this exemption, however, the landed proprietors and receivers of interest in the funds to such amount were excluded. He could not conceive the grounds upon which this exclusion was professed to rest. It certainly was, with respect to the funds, a breach of the principle upon which loans had been contracted for; and what effects such an innovation was likely to have upon any future loan he would not pretend to say. For this strange difference in the application, he was aware of but one argument, namely, that it was fair to take a distinction between the profits of capital employed in industry and that not arising from the same source. This distinction he thought the very reverse of wisdom; for if an equal tax was imposed on the revenue of the land owner, and the profits of the man in trade, the deductions should be the same from both. Why should persons of humble revenue in the funds and in land be made the sacrifices of this singular difference, while those of superior revenues were left quite untouched?—Mr. Pitt next called the attention of the House to the situation of many of those who were to be made liable to the whole tax without any abatements, who had claims to abatement much more powerful than numerous classes of possessors of other property to whom abatements were extended. When it was considered that many of those to be affected by it were the aged and the infirm, altogether incapable of increasing their income by any exertion of their own; that their wretched pittance could receive no possible augmentation; was it consistent either with humanity, far less justice, to lay them under a pressure so severe? The principle of the bill as it now stood, was unfair; if it were allowed to remain, the same regulation ought to be extended to property in the funds as to all the lower species of property. But, above all, he deprecated the proposed regulation as inconsistent with national good faith, and as calculated to strike the first blow against that credit for which the country had been so long distinguished. In every loan bill the fundamental principle was, that there should be no deduction from the dividends of those who became the creditors of the public. Some persons had carried this so far as to contend that they ought not to be included in a general tax on income. He was at least confident that it was inconsistent with the justice of parliament to place those who had lent money to the public in a worse situation than at the time when the money was advanced. There was no violation of any compact with the public creditor in making property arising from the funds be considered as a part of general income; but from the moment that the funds were separately taxed, what foundation could the public creditor rest upon in any future loan which it might be necessary to raise for the public service? It would indeed be most extraordinary if, at the time that we were, for the purpose of upholding the character of parliament, and maintaining the good faith of the country, paying every year upwards of six millions to the

Digitized by Google

extinction of the national debt, we should, for the sake of gaining a revenue of a few hundred thousand pounds, resort to a tax which might strike at the root of public credit, and materially injure the future resources of the country. Such a step was peculiarly unseasonable at a moment when the propriety of raising a large portion of the supplies within the year had met the universal approbation of all parts of the House. As soon as the motion for taking the report into further consideration was disposed of, he would move an instruction to the committee.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that if it could be proved that the operation of the tax would be inconsistent with humanity, he should not persevere in pressing it. But unless this could be made out, he should support it, as a tax the best calculated to raise a large portion of the supplies within the year. Till that night he was not aware that there was any objection to the plan of raising a tax on the profits arising from capital. It was not meant that any distinction should be formed betwixt the different species of capital. It was to the income arising from this capital that the provisions of the act were to apply. The various species of capital were proposed to be divided into capital in landed property, property in the funds, and money arising from interest or annuities. The other denomination of property to which the act was to extend arose from income dependent upon personal exertions, or arising from professions. Every exertion had been made to render the operation of the tax on income and capital as equal as possible, while means had been employed to prevent the tax applicable to capital from being superadded to personal labour and industry. On this principle, the ratio had been established from 60*l.* to 150*l.* a year in estimating the exemptions and abatements. The funds stood exactly on the same footing in the application of the tax as landed and other species of property. As to the equality of the operation of the tax, it was formed on principles which appeared the best calculated to promote that most important object. He had no objection to the present tax being called an income tax, except that he thought that the title assigned to it more fully described its nature. He thought the proposition for instructing the committee unnecessary and irregular. It could only embarrass the proceedings of the committee, without at all binding their decisions.

Mr. *Pitt* then moved, "That it be an instruction to the said committee, that they do make provision in the said bill, that the like exemptions and abatements shall be allowed to persons possessed of income arising from land or from property in the public funds, as shall be allowed on the like amount of income arising from any other description of property, trade, profession or employment."—A long conversation ensued, in the course of which, the chancellor of the exchequer expressed his surprise at Mr. Pitt's unexpected motion; after which the House divided: Yeas, 50; Noes, 150.

July 14. The House having resolved itself into a committee on the bill,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said:—Sir, I have considered the sentiments which were thrown out last night, with regard to exemptions, and am decidedly of the opinion, that no breach of good faith could possibly attach on the supposed distinction between income arising from trade and other species of income. I would beg the committee to advert to the principles of the bill, in considering of the propriety of the alteration about to be submitted to them. It is proposed to make a distinction between the income arising from capital, and that arising from bodily labour and skill. In those cases where the income is produced by a combination of interest, from capital, and that arising from bodily labour, it was my wish to grant indulgence, so that no person should pay more than 5*l.* when his income amounted to less than 150*l.* The interest arising from capital is then one which may be fairly fixed with the tax. I mean to propose an exception from the principle of the bill, in so far as regards that sort of income which arises not from bodily labour, but from the learned professions, which is even more extensive than that arising from capital. Of all the cases of hardship to which this tax can apply, I conceive that it is most severe on the income arising from that species of industry. It will not be the policy of parliament at this time to exclude the income arising from that source, however, from contributing a fair sum towards the present exigencies. There is no one who arrives to great attainments in such professions as I allude to, who has not acquired a considerable proportion of capital; and you

Digitized by Google

are, therefore, to combine the advantages which he thus derives, not from bodily labour, but from the labour of the mind, with the income arising from his capital. Almost every person engaged in trade, may carry on that trade by means of representatives; but persons engaged in the learned professions must give in person that advice which is necessary; for no proxy can possibly be admitted. It is absolutely impossible to apply an unobjectionable mode of taxation. I feel the difficulty of extending the exemptions, on account of creating a prodigious addition to the trouble of the commissioners. It does not appear to me, however, to be unjust or irrational to make a distinction, between capital arising from trade yielding a large interest, and that which yields a moderate income. No defalcation of any consequence would arise from the proposed exemption. There is no ground for a charge of violation of faith. It may be a matter of surprise to the committee, that after considering the subject with great anxiety, I should now feel disposed to think, under the present circumstances, that the public creditors should enjoy some exemption from the present tax. I am inclined to join in the wish which was pretty generally expressed last night, to extend the exemptions to persons deriving their incomes from land to the amount of 150*l.* and to propose a scale for that purpose. But I must fairly own that I do this with great difficulty. It is a difficulty, however, which I am satisfied may be got the better of, at the expense of what is highly important towards the preservation of the bill—the avoiding disclosure and contributing towards the ease of collecting the tax. Sir, this is a moment, when above all others, I am glad to see a reluctance in gentlemen to acquiesce in the adoption of any measure which may tend to injure the feelings of any class of individuals. It is most desirable to carry with us the opinions and feelings of that very description of persons for whom I have been brought to reconcile my mind to these exemptions. They constitute a very considerable proportion of the yeomanry, whose zeal, spirit, and ardent love of their country, have been manifested in a conspicuous manner during the last ten years, and never more alive to that ardent zeal than at the present moment. I am assured that an expectation was entertained by them, that they would experience the indulgence of the legislature, and that persons of a given income would not be subject to be taxed so fully as others. But having said this, I must acknowledge, that I look forward to some degree of defalcation in the amount of the tax, which will create a necessity, if the war should continue, for parliament to act up to its avowed principle, of raising the supplies within the year.

Mr. *Pitt* said, he had heard the observations of the chancellor of the exchequer with inexpressible satisfaction. They had freed his mind from those objections which, had the measure been persisted in as it originally stood, would not have prevented him from supporting the bill in general. His objections could not have prevented him supporting the system of raising great part of the supplies within the year. But he thought the dangers would have counteracted the advantages of the plan. He was most anxious that there should be a probability of every man concurring in the measure in general, and in every part of it. Though in the detail there might be considerable difficulties, he trusted there would be none as to the fundamental principles. Understanding that the point which formed the basis of his objection was given up, he was not anxious to tread over the controversy, or to advert to the motives which might have produced the changes.

The bill, after being repeatedly committed, passed the House on the 1st of August.

The King's Message respecting the House of Orange.] July 21. Lord Hawkesbury presented the following Message from his Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His Majesty having taken into his consideration the situation of the illustrious House of Orange, the bonds of alliance and affinity which subsists between his Majesty and that House, the important services which have been rendered by them to this country on so many occasions, and the losses which they sustained in the course of the last war, recommends these circumstances to the serious attention of the House of Commons; and his Majesty relies on the justice and liberality of this House, to enable him to make such pecuniary allowances to this illustrious family as may appear to be warranted by a consideration of their present situation, and of their claims on the generosity of this country. G. *R.*"

Digitized by Google

July 25. The said Message was taken into consideration in the committee of supply.

Lord *Hawkesbury* represented, that the proposition he was to make in favour of the House of Orange, was a claim binding in gratitude and generosity. This country had for the last century, found no ally more faithful than the illustrious, but unfortunate House of Orange; nor could the important services, rendered by William the 3rd, in bringing about our glorious Revolution, be ever forgotten by Englishmen. After the peace of Amiens, the Dutch offered indemnities to the prince of Orange, only on condition, that we should restore the ships taken in his name. That was refused by this country; some indemnity was therefore due from us. What he proposed was, that a sum of 60,000*l.* should be granted for the benefit of his family, and a pension of 16,000*l.* per annum, during the pleasure of his majesty.

Mr. *Canning* disapproved highly of the conduct of ministers, in the negotiation. He thought they ought to have remonstrated directly with France, and to have retained in their own hands sufficient pledges for the fulfilment of this part of the treaty.

Sir *F. Burdett* severely reprobated the proposition, which he considered one of the most indecorous that could possibly be brought forward. If the prince of Orange had betrayed his own country to the interests of our government, he deserved no compensation: if, on the contrary, it was for her own interests that Holland went to war, it was England that should claim compensation from Holland, and not Holland from England. If the prince of Orange was now to obtain indemnity for his losses, the elector of Hanover might next demand compensation for the loss of that country.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the value of the ships taken, in the name of the prince of Orange, was 150,000*l.* As we refused to restore those ships to Holland, who offered, on that condition, to give indemnity to the prince, that circumstance, certainly gave him a claim, if not upon the justice, at least upon the generosity of the British nation.

The resolutions were agreed to.

The King's Message relative to the Rebellion in Ireland.] July 28. The Chancellor of the Exchequer presented the following Message from his Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His Majesty feels the deepest regret in acquainting the House of Commons, that a treasonable and rebellious spirit of insurrection has manifested itself in Ireland, which has been marked by circumstances of peculiar atrocity in the city of Dublin. His Majesty relies with perfect confidence on the wisdom of his Parliament, that such measures will be forthwith adopted as are best calculated to afford protection and security to his Majesty's loyal subjects in that part of the United Kingdom, and to restore and preserve general tranquillity. G. *R.*"

The Message being read from the Chair,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose to move an Address of Thanks thereon. He said:—There must exist in this House a general anticipation of those feelings and sentiments which his majesty has entertained in making the present communication. There is also, I am persuaded, a disposition to justify and repay that confidence, by adopting such measures as may be best suited to the present conjuncture. Government had every reason to suppose, that the contamination of principles which had produced in former years, the calamities of rebellion in Ireland had been completely done away. These hopes, I am sorry to say, have been disappointed. Notwithstanding, however, all that has happened, I am convinced that the great majority of the people of Ireland are loyal to their king, and anxious to support the present happy constitution. Lamentable, indeed, it is, at this critical juncture, that any portion of his majesty's subjects should have been laying plans for the overthrow of that constitution under which they have enjoyed so many blessings. I am persuaded, however, that the number of those who are rebelliously disposed, is but small. I shall lay before the House, after this question is disposed of, information concerning the particular instances of insurrection contained in the proclamation issued by the lord-lieutenant in Ireland; but I cannot conceive that any information can be reckoned necessary to persuade the House to agree to the address which I am about to propose; namely, "That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, to return his Majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious Message; to assure his Majesty, that we

Digitized by Google

learn with the strongest feelings of regret and indignation, that a treasonable and rebellious spirit of insurrection has manifested itself in Ireland, which has been marked with circumstances of peculiar atrocity in the city of Dublin; that his Majesty may be assured of the readiness and determination of his faithful Commons, to adopt forthwith such measures as may appear to them to be best calculated to afford protection and security to his Majesty's loyal subjects in that part of the United Kingdom, and to restore and preserve general tranquillity."

Mr. *Windham* said:—Sir, the proposing of an address to the throne, upon the same day on which his majesty's message has been delivered, is exceedingly unusual. I think it respectful to the crown, to make a small interval of time betwixt a message and an address, because it testifies more strongly the degree of attention which parliament have paid to it. The objects comprehended by this message are not at present fit for mature consideration. I conceive a great deal of information to be wanted, before we can frame an address proper for the occasion. When we have something more than this general communication of a rebellion having broken out in Ireland, many different reflections may arise out of the particulars in regard to what this House ought to do. Is it easy to say, that Ireland has been surprised by open rebellion; that government have been so ignorant of the danger that even the capital has been nearly wrested from them by means of that rebellion? Are not these points on which the House should be informed, before they adopt an answer to such a communication? For my part, I cannot conceive it possible, that the peasants of Ireland whose minds were lately so agitated, should, all of a sudden become perfectly loyal and peaceable subjects.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he rose not to answer any argument, for he had heard none, but merely to express his astonishment, that any member could start an objection to a measure of so much urgency. He concluded by describing eloquently, the sufferings which a delay of twenty-four hours might occasion to the loyal inhabitants of Ireland.

Mr. *Hutchinson* cordially supported the address, and expressed the greatest sorrow for the outrages that had disgraced the part of the united kingdom from which he came. Whatever were his feelings towards his country, he should vote for strong measures upon the present occasion.

Lord *Hawkesbury* replied with great warmth to Mr. Windham, he said that right hon. gentleman had formerly been troubled with no such qualms or delicate scruples as he was at present; he had frequently before voted for addresses on the same day the message had been delivered. The proposition of delay was perfectly absurd in such an emergency as the present; the only tendency of his objection was, to show that there did not exist a perfect unanimity in that House.

Dr. *Laurence* insisted, that the whole system of ministers consisted in blinding the people, and preventing them from seeing the real state of affairs. They had constantly withheld information, and they now demanded a hasty vote, from passion and not from deliberation.

Lord Castlereagh replied; and after some observations from Mr. Alexander and Mr. Archdall, the question on the address was put, and carried unanimously.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then laid before the House a copy of the Proclamation issued by the lord-lieutenant and privy council of Ireland, offering rewards for apprehending the murderers of lord Kilwarden and the reverend Mr. Wolfe, which being read by the clerk at the table, the right hon. gentleman said:—Sir the House will have observed, from the proclamation which has been just read that the melancholy outrage which it describes was, in the opinion of his majesty's government, the result of dangerous and traitorous insurrection; and nothing should induce me to bring forward the proposition which I intended this day to offer for the adoption of this House, if I thought the horrid outrage was the result of ordinary riot, or any other species of attack than one intended directly against the state; and I am free to admit there could be no other ground which could justify a proposition for narrowing the liberty of the subject or trenching in any degree upon the principles of the constitution. It is with the utmost pain I feel the necessity of bringing forward such a measure. The communication just submitted to the House, does not furnish details of the circumstance attending this atrocious business so full as could be wished, in order to prove that it was the result of a treasonable insurrection. But there are occasions when parliament may feel itself

Digitized by Google

justified in the adoption of vigorous measures. Such I mean this day to propose, upon the solemn assurance of his majesty's ministers, that circumstances exist to warrant the adoption of vigorous measures. This insurrection was obviously concerted with the enemy, and attempted at a moment when invasion menaced our shores. The bill which I have to propose is not one to enable the government in Ireland to declare martial law in districts where insurrection exists, for that is a power which his majesty already possesses, but a bill purporting to be for the protection of the lives and properties of his majesty's loyal subjects, and for the better suppression of insurrection and rebellion; and the object of which will be, to enable the lord-lieutenant when any persons shall be taken in rebellion, to order them to be tried immediately by a court-martial. I do not mean to give even the lord-lieutenant of Ireland the power of superseding by martial law the operation of the civil code, nor to deprive the subject in civil cases of the advantages derived from the ordinary course of the law of the land. Should the House adopt the present motion, I should follow it up with another, for leave to bring in a bill to suspend, for a time to be limited, the Habeas Corpus act in Ireland. This bill is calculated to effect, if possible, by more lenient means, the suppression of those crimes which, without this suspension, must force the government to the necessity of bringing to trial, by court-martial, persons against whom suspicions of high-treason are entertained; but by detaining such persons in custody, we prevent them from engaging in treasonable machinations; and persons so arrested may be tried in the ordinary process of the law without any military interference. It has been said, that the present is a case which calls for delay and inquiry; but, Sir, if ever there was a case which called for promptitude and unanimity it is the measure of this day. What! shall we be told, when rebellion has actually broken out, and every moment is pregnant with danger, that we are to hesitate before we arm the government with powers for its suppression. When the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Windham) was a member of his majesty's government, a bill for suspending the Habeas Corpus passed through both Houses in a single day. There have been many other instances of bills equally urgent in their nature having passed with similar expedition; and if the present measure be at all fit for adoption, it is fit to be adopted without a moment's delay. Without wishing that government should be screened from any responsibility, I call upon the House not to expose Ireland to public danger by delay. And here it is I am induced to admire the conduct of an hon. gentleman (Mr. Sheridan), which presents a contrast to that of the other hon. member. That hon. gentleman, laying aside all considerations of party, comes forward on every occasion to give his support and assistance to the preservation of his country. At a time when a mutiny in the fleet unhappily broke out, he was found to give his assistance to government. In 1798, when the country was threatened with invasion—at a subsequent period, when the ravages of famine seemed to menace the land—and when, on a late occasion a dispute with the northern powers was likely to involve the country in great difficulty, that hon. gentleman has uniformly brought his great powers into action for the general good. On the latter occasion, when other gentlemen were accusing ministers of culpable neglect, and denouncing heavy charges against them, he exclaimed, "Let us now think only of securing the ship if she be in danger; and when it is past, we can bring the captain to account. Let us not talk about who is the minister, but consider who is the enemy to cope with." It is sentiments like these which will, in the page of history, stamp immortal glory on his name. The right hon. gentleman then moved for leave to bring in the bill.

Mr. *Windham* did not mean to question the propriety of the measure; the necessity for which rested upon the declaration of ministers, with the aid of the little knowledge which had been disclosed by the proclamation. He could not help observing, that it was owing to the peace of Amiens that the present necessity existed. The right hon. gentleman seemed to be dealing out his eulogies with an unsparing hand.

Mr. *Sheridan* said:—It is impossible for me not to feel grateful for the praise bestowed on my conduct by the chancellor of the exchequer. The learned gentleman has borrowed a joke from his right hon. leader (Mr. Windham), in saying that I have this day fixed the side which I am espousing. My answer is, that I challenge either of them to point out a single act of mine which admits of the

Digitized by Google

comment. I defy either of them to show that I have ever abandoned any one political principle which I have professed—forfeited one public pledge which I have given—or deserted any political attachment which I have formed. If my learned friend wants information respecting changing sides, and alteration of political connexions, he should apply to his right hon. neighbour, and not to me. He has indeed gone the round of all sides. I sat with him on this side of the House a long time, until he found a golden opportunity to cross over to those whom no man amongst us had been more strenuous in opposing. He then sat on the treasury bench opposite to me, just as long as he could. He then made a diagonal motion to his present situation, where I sincerely hope he may remain. But the right hon. gentleman accuses me of giving a new support to ministers inconsistent with my former conduct respecting them. Now, I have never engaged in opposition to the present administration. One only act of theirs I opposed, and severely reprehended; and that was the bill of indemnity to shield and cover that right hon. gentleman and his colleagues. But were I to admit, that at its first formation I did not think so well of this administration, where is the inconsistency in my supporting measures brought forward by them, which meet my sincere approbation? I have never, like that right hon. gentleman, professed sincere and unalterable attachment, to one man, and then deserted, reviled, and opposed him. I have never, like that right hon. gentleman, held out my political opponent as a master piece of corruption and hypocrisy, or boasted, that I had bared the "filthy dowlas," which skulked under his flowery robe, and then placed myself at his feet, wrapped in a remnant of that dowlas. These things I have not done. What I will do, is to give an humble but sincere and zealous support to an administration so virulently and unfairly assailed, as long as I see them executing, according to the best of their judgment, the important duties which belong to the situation in which they are placed. I claim no merit in saying that this support shall be most disinterested. It shall be free from all colour, or suspicion, that in giving it, I am influenced by any motive, but a sincere and heartfelt love of my country—a country which, in my soul and conscience, I believe contains the best, the worthiest, and the happiest community in the universe.

After some farther debate, the bill went through its several stages, and was passed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer then obtained leave to bring in a bill to enable the lord lieutenant of Ireland to secure and detain such persons as he should suspect to be conspiring against his majesty's person and government. The bill was brought up, carried through all its stages, and passed. A clause was introduced into the two bills for limiting their duration to six weeks after the commencement of the next session. The bills were sent to the Lords, and, at half past ten o'clock, a message came down informing the House that the Lords had agreed to the same without any amendment.

Aug. 5. In a committee on the bill to amend the Military Service bill,

Mr. *Wilberforce* disapproved of the distinction made between those who served in volunteer corps, and those who should serve in the levy *en masse*.

The *Secretary at War* explained, that when the number of volunteers should be sufficient for the defence of the country, it had been the intention of the legislature to empower his majesty to suspend the operation of the act.

Mr. *Windham* disapproved of the volunteer corps, as forming bodies of aristocracy for the defence of the country, from which some were excluded from not being able to purchase uniforms, and others from that kind of modesty, which declined the distinction of a red coat, and prevented men from associating with those superior to themselves in rank. His opinion on that subject, was much strengthened by observations he had met in the public prints; in which he but seldom found any thing worthy attention.

Mr. *Sheridan* ridiculed this attack on the public prints, and said, that although the daily papers presented nothing worthy the right hon. gentleman's notice, yet there was a certain weekly paper (Cobbett's Register), to which he appeared more partial. For his part, he was candid enough to allow, that there was some merit in that print [Mr. W. bowed]. The right hon. gentleman answered with a condescending bow, he should therefore go no farther, for fear of hurting the feelings and blushing modesty of an author, perhaps the right hon. gentleman wrote a little for that publication. He liked the present bill, because it went to increase the number of volunteers.

Digitized by Google

Every body must allow, that the volunteers of the metropolis were much superior in discipline and efficiency to what could be expected from an equal number of men, raised by the levy *en masse*. It was, however a very good hint to men to turn volunteers, to know that if they did not, they might, in the course of a single month, find themselves in the ranks of common soldiers; subject to be tied up to the halberts, if they were to give a saucy answer to the serjeant.

Mr. *Windham* said, that the hon. gentleman had shown all the zeal of a new convert, in supporting administration, and, like a raw recruit, had fired off his musket, without ascertaining where the enemy was. He contended, that all this complicated machinery brought forward by government for the defence of the country, was not likely to add a single man to its effective or disposable force. In speaking of the press, he allowed that it now showed some ardour and energy, but it acted like the hon. gentleman: first it did all the mischief it could, and set the world on fire, and now it came with its bucket of water to extinguish it. He then panegyrized Mr. Cobbett, who he said, merited a statue of gold for his conduct in America, before he came to this country. That writer had resolutely opposed all the bad principles which had been propogated for the last ten years on politics, including those which the hon. gentleman had so often urged in that House.

Mr. *Sheridan* was happy the forms of a committee allowed him a second shot which he did not mean to fire in the air. He said, he was neither convert nor recruit. He had always, when the country was in a critical situation, lent his support to government; in this support, however, he was no recruit; he would accept neither rank nor pay, but should serve as a volunteer. He wished the right hon. gentleman would publish a book to be called "The art of raising the spirit of a country; by a late secretary at war;" for certainly the means taken by that right hon. gentleman in parliament, were the most whimsical that had ever been thought of: first, he endeavoured to persuade the people that the country was lost, unless one specific individual was made the minister; and that all their resources must be mismanaged and ill directed by the present government; secondly, that our honour was irrecoverably gone, and that our militia and volunteers were good for nothing.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* defended government from the charge of unnecessary delay. This measure could not with any propriety have been adopted until the foundation of the army of reserve had been first laid. He considered that there never was a man who more completely misconceived the means of raising the spirit of a country, than Mr. Windham appeared to have done, in endeavouring to lead the people to their duty, by instilling groundless fears and alarms.

The bill went through the committee.

Debate on Colonel Craufurd's Motion relative to the Defence of the Country.] Aug. 2. Colonel *Craufurd* rose to make his promised motion. Before he entered upon the subject, he assured the House it was his intention studiously to abstain from any details which, from being made public, might have an injurious tendency. He thought, however, that all this secrecy was needless. There could be no doubt but the situation of the country and of its coasts, were well known to the enemy. If we could take a peep into the Bureau de la Guerre at Paris, or into Buonaparté's cabinet, we should find plans—[Here Mr. Frankland moved the standing order of the House, for the exclusion of strangers: and the gallery remained shut for the remainder of the evening.]—The hon. officer concluded his speech with moving, "That, as it now appears to be in the contemplation of his majesty's government to erect works in the neighbourhood of London, in case an enemy should, by any extraordinary fortune of war, be able to approach the metropolis, it is the opinion of this House, that such a precaution will be highly wise and expedient; but that the efficacy of this and other measures of the same description, in different parts of the kingdom, must materially depend on their being executed before the disembarkation of an enemy shall have actually taken place: And the House will most cheerfully concur in granting to his majesty such powers, and making good such expenses as may be found necessary, for the most speedy and effectual accomplishment of these highly important objects."—Upon this, a long debate ensued, and an hon. member moved, "That the other orders of the day be now read." The only

Digitized by Google

speech which has transpired with any sort of accuracy is the following:

Mr. *Francis* said: Mr. Speaker, in submitting my thoughts to the House on the present motion, I hope I shall not be suspected of pretending to military knowledge, or of thinking myself at all equal to the discussion of questions purely military. But there are some points of very great importance, which the motion naturally brings into view, and of which the common sense of any man, without professional information, may form a rational opinion. On some of these, I request your indulgence to be heard for a few minutes. First, however, I think myself bound to take notice of two things advanced by an hon. gentleman on the other side (Mr. H. Brown), in answer to an hon. bart. (sir F. Burdett) behind me, of whom he affirmed that he was a declared partisan of universal suffrage, and had maintained that dangerous opinion on occasions, when it might be attended with the most mischievous consequences. What the hon. baronet may have said in other places, I know not. On this night he has not uttered one word to that effect, nor do I believe that he ever did maintain such a doctrine in this House. On the contrary, I understand him to disclaim it. But the hon. gentleman is just as severe on every other idea of parliamentary reform, as on that, which he particularly, and as I think, justly reprobates. He forgets how many great authorities, on all sides of this House, and in all quarters of the country, are involved in that general condemnation. Among the rest, he forgets that no man has gone further in exposing the defects in the representation, and in promoting a parliamentary reform, than my right hon. friend (Mr. Tierney) on the other side, who I am sure will never disavow his opinion, or desert the cause in which he was eminently distinguished, or the character of that society who acted with him in supporting it. The hon. gentleman says, that military appointments and commands exclusively belong to the crown, and that we should invade that part of the prerogative, if we attempted to inquire in what manner it was exercised. I hope I shall be able to show that the question, incidentally brought under the consideration of the House, and to which this opinion is applied, is connected with national interests, and ought not to be determined solely by individual discretion. But I must tell that hon. gentleman, that he mistakes the constitution of our government, if he conceives that this or any other exercise of the prerogative is a personal act of the sovereign. The king, in his royal character, acts by the advice of his privy council, and not otherwise. The wise purpose of this institution is not only that the sovereign may have the benefit of good advice, but that this House and the nation may know how to direct their inquiries, and where to fix their censure, if bad advice should appear to have been followed. The House, I believe, will support me in reprobating a doctrine, which converts the prerogative into personal will and pleasure, and annihilates some of the principal functions of parliament. The powers of war and peace are generally vested in the crown. But if, in the conduct of war, or in the transaction of peace, you thought there was ground for suspicion, or reason for inquiry, would you suffer ministers to plead the prerogative in bar of your proceeding? Would you endure to hear them say, what certainly the doctrine would warrant, "We have made war without necessity, and peace without security; but it is no affair of yours. War and peace belong to the prerogative. We owe you no account, and we shall give you no answer." I leave it to the hon. gentleman to consider, in what manner parliament ought to receive such language. I believe they would soon teach the minister, who held it, a very different lesson.—The motion of the hon. officer fairly opens the debate to all manner of considerations connected with the war, particularly with the expectation, for I disdain to call it the apprehension, of an invasion. If I rightly understand that part of the secretary at war's speech, which related to the probability of an invasion of this island by a French army, in force sufficient, not merely to do mischief, but to make a general and serious impression, and of its being attempted in the quarter against which it has been denounced, I confess I am inclined to concur in his opinion. To be convinced of the reality of such a design, I shall wait, as he does, to see whether the enemy in fact have resolution enough to come out of their harbours with the first division of their transports to anchor in deep water, and to wait there till the next tide for the second division, and possibly, till the tide following for the third. When I see that they have had the cou-

Digitized by Google

rage to encounter, and the good fortune to escape all the dangers and difficulties of such an operation, in the face of an enemy, who are masters of the sea, I shall begin to believe that they seriously think it practicable to invade England in that form, and that at all events they are determined to make the attempt, that is, from the ports of Holland and Flanders, and to land on the coast of Essex. If their purpose be, as it is stated, to march to London, of course they will endeavour to land on that part of the coast which is nearest to their object. Sir, I am far from wishing to abate preparation, or to encourage any other idea of security but that which depends on vigilance and activity. Still it is a point to be considered, whether the quarter in which the enemy must expect to find you best prepared, (because you have had most warning), be that exactly in which you are most likely to be attacked. A mistake in that speculation, may leave you open in some place, where you are much more vulnerable. Some of the reasons for the affirmative are rather extraordinary. Buonaparté has publicly and solemnly promised France, and threatened England, that he will invade this island, and march to the capital. He has engaged his word to his army, and to all Europe: of course he must keep it. He has pledged his honour, and he is bound to redeem it. Characters are easily made and unmade to suit an argument. Up to this period we have heard of nothing but the flagitious perfidy and falsehood of Buonaparté; that he is incapable of truth, and insensible of shame. But now, all of a sudden, he is turned into a person of such strict veracity, and scrupulous honour, that having once made a voluntary promise, or contracted a voluntary engagement, he would risk the fate of his army and of his government, as well as his own, sooner than break it; as if the very demonstration he holds out might not be a part of his policy, and intended to divert our attention from his real purpose. I have nothing to do with the morals of this man; but I am very unwilling to let him pass for a fool, lest we ourselves should be the dupes and possibly the victims of a false conception of his character. If the accounts we have heard of his personal deportment, and of the language he sometimes holds, be true, as I dare say they are, he is evidently a man without discretion in his conversation or temper, or even decency in his behaviour. So much the better for those who have to deal with him, if they know how to use their advantage. But I see no reason yet to believe, that in his political conduct, he is a mere idiot, who has not sense enough to keep his own secret, much less to mislead his opponent by false lights. Holland and Flanders are the only quarter where harbours and vessels can be found, equal to so great an embarkation as could answer any rational purpose of invasion; and with no other stores and provisions than would be indispensably necessary at the lowest computation. The distance is considerable. The management of a fleet of three or four hundred vessels is extremely difficult, even without being disturbed by an enemy. To such a fleet, crowded with landmen, the mere chances of the sea would be formidable. A long calm would be a great distress; a gale of wind might be fatal. The wind must not only be favourable, but moderate. A short passage would be essential to success; but then it must blow fresh, which would bring them on a lee shore, where they would find such a surf, as a great fleet so filled could not encounter without very considerable risk. Let it be granted, nevertheless, that by dint of good fortune, they have crossed the sea, and landed their army on the coast—What sort of an army will it be? without cavalry, without artillery, except perhaps a few field-pieces, and with just as much ammunition and bread as every soldier can carry for his own use. I shall even admit that, by some means or other, inconceivable to my understanding, they are permitted to march to London. On that supposition I shall only say, that this land would not deserve the name of England, it would not be a country, in which a man of common spirit would wish to exist, if a single soldier of that army returned to France, otherwise than by our permission.—Sir, it is not my intention to look back for any purpose of finding fault. I shall not inquire now, whether the measures of government, for raising the greatest possible national force, were the wisest in themselves, or whether some of them ought not to have been undertaken at an earlier period. In every thing that is well intended to resist and defeat the projects of France, there can be no difference of feeling in this House. At a numerous meeting of the county of Surrey, where I attended yesterday, there was but one

Digitized by Google

voice and one sentiment on this subject. If it depended on me, the same unanimity should prevail here. Then comes the question, whether ministers have done all that they ought to do to establish that unanimity and to turn it to the best account? Of the utility of the measure referred to in the motion I do not pretend to be a competent judge. But this conclusion at least is indisputable, that, if a plan to surround London with lines or redoubts be adviseable, the execution of it ought not to be deferred till the enemy shall have landed. Works of so great an extent cannot be attempted, much less could they be well executed in the face of an enemy. If they are undertaken in a hurry, they will be executed in confusion, and probably do more harm than good. Imperfect defences, hastily erected, are soon overset, and in some cases turned against you. In looking to the other military measures adopted by government, for the security of the country, I am willing to presume that a sufficient force is provided. Is that all? Have they done enough? Have they omitted nothing indispensably necessary to a wise and vigorous application of the force in their hands? On the best of my judgment, and with the deepest conviction, my answer is, that their preparations are defective in two essential articles. The subject I know is delicate as well as important, and I hope to be heard with a favourable construction. By inrolling the nation, by raising a great body of men, by organizing these men under a variety of titles, and furnishing them with arms, all you have gained is a material or instrumental power. What I apprehend is, that, without other conditions and properties, the mass of such a power may be unmanageable and inactive, if not dangerous. The power must be animated by a great pervading spirit, to give it life and motion; and then it must be directed by wisdom and experience. Have ministers taken the most effectual course to call out such a spirit, and to provide for such a direction? Before the subject was introduced this night by my hon. friend (Mr. Barham), it was not unknown to me that an offer had been made by an illustrious personage, of his services in the present crisis; that he had requested to be employed wherever his appearance and example might be most effectual, and that his offer had been positively rejected. My attachment to his royal highness bars me from saying much of what I think and feel of the injury he suffers by that refusal. On that subject, therefore, I shall say nothing but what I should have equally said, on public ground, if I had not had the honour of being personally known to him. When the heir apparent, when the first subject, and the second person of the kingdom, desires nothing but that he may be allowed to share in the danger, and to contribute to the defence of his country, it is difficult to conceive, on what principle a request so reasonable and so honourable could have been refused. To say nothing of personal merits, is it fair that he alone, of all his illustrious family, should be excluded from such station and leading in the army, as might in some degree be suitable to his rank, as might give him an opportunity of acting up to his principles, and of showing the nation that he is worthy of the place he holds, and fit to stand first in the succession to the crown? To such a man, so stationed and so acting, is it just, is it honest to say, "He may live in obscurity, he may enjoy in retirement, the provision which parliament has made for his subsistence? His royal brothers shall be invited into action, but, as for the prince of Wales, we shall take care that the true spirit of his character shall not be understood. All means of acquiring personal honour, in this great emergency, shall be denied him. The nation shall not know how much he deserves their affections, or whether, beyond a mere legal right, he has any moral pretensions or generous qualifications to entitle him, to govern them hereafter." Sir, I am of opinion, that the character of the prince of Wales is public property, and that whatever is said or done to lower it in the estimation of the country is a public injury. We have a right to his services, and above all to his example. It is not what his single hand can do. Any other individual may do as much. I look to his appearance in the front of the contest, for the general animation it would inspire, for the spirit it would excite. What right have you to deprive the army and the people of the benefit of an example; which, you well know, the meanest man in the kingdom would be ashamed not to follow? In another view of your preparation, I see another great defect. I speak of things, not of persons; and surely it ought to be superfluous for me to say, that I have no wish to disparage any man, and least of all, his royal highness the duke of York.

Digitized by Google

If the first general whom this country has produced, if John duke of Marlborough were at the head of the army, I should say to him, what I say now, "Your occupations, your labours and your cares are more than any single person is equal to. Without the advice and assistance of a council to relieve you in the detail of business, to examine plans, to decide questions as they occur, and occasionally to act in your absence, it is not possible for you to give due attention to the other and still more urgent duties of your command." When I speak of a council, Sir, it is not with a view to direct or control the commander-in-chief in action or in the field; to instruct him where to march, when to fight, or how to retreat. These things for the most part belong to instant execution, and cannot in their nature be subject to a distant council. What I allude to would be such a military council as that which succeeded with our enemies in the course of the late war, as long as they made use of it. I mean the stationary council at Paris, of which Carnot was a member. I forget the other names. They prepared and digested the general plan of the campaign. They concerted general measures, and corresponded on every event with the commanders in the field: and I well remember, that the success of those campaigns was universally attributed to the wisdom of that council. Sir, the merit of delivering this opinion does not originate here. We owe it to the wisdom and resolution of a noble lord (earl of Suffolk), whom I have the honour and the happiness to call my friend, that advice to this effect has been offered in another place, where undoubtedly it was received with benignity, and must have made a due impression. For that act of public and personal spirit, he deserves the gratitude, and something more than the gratitude of his country. Whatever pretences may be set up to the contrary, I cannot think it possible that any member of this House should, in his heart and conscience, disapprove of the measure. If it be rejected on a division, considering the nature of the question, the real sense of the House will be proved by the strength of the minority. On the whole, my conclusion is, that the mass of your force is sufficient. Let that mass be animated by great examples, and governed by wisdom, and then let the designs of the enemy be what they may, this island is safe. But is it true that this is the quarter, in which an invasion is most likely to be attempted, or in which we are not best prepared and most able to repel it? Is it likely that the enemy will make their attack on that part of the empire, where they are sure to find a powerful direct resistance, supported by the union as well as courage of the whole people; and that they will neglect another avenue of invasion, where, falsely I hope, but not unnaturally, they may expect to meet with less resistance, and some co-operation. I hope his majesty's ministers have done something more effectual for the security of Ireland, than by furnishing the government there with many copies of a loyal address and a vigorous act of parliament. Assistance of that kind may be dispatched in a day; but I hope it will not be depended on without supplies of another nature. Pikes and bayonets are not to be opposed with paper. Against treason and rebellion, co-operating with invasion, if that should be attempted, a sufficient increase of real force must be provided, and no time lost in sending it. Concerning the actual government of that kingdom, I wish I could speak with entire and unreserved approbation. Though I have not the honour of knowing the noble lord (earl of Hardwicke) who is at the head of it, I willingly assent to the character lately given of him in this House. Courtesy, justice, and moderation are great and useful qualities in the government of any country, particularly of Ireland. But in these times, and in the actual situation of Ireland, other qualities are required. They call for vigilance and vigour, as well as justice and moderation. But of vigilance and vigour, at the moment when they were most wanted, I see no evidence. The Irish council appear to me not only not to have had, as surely they might, any previous intelligence of an intended insurrection, or any suspicion, as they ought to have had, of a rebellious conspiracy against his majesty's government, in prosecution of which the outrages were committed, but not even to have taken warning from an extraordinary discovery, made by accident, which ought to have put the council on its guard, which ought to have roused their attention, and engaged them to redouble their precautions, at least, for the safety of the capital. The insurrection happened on Saturday the 23rd of July. On the preceding Monday a powder mill by accident

Digitized by Google

blew up in that part of Dublin called the Liberty of Meath. A powder mill, existing in such a place, was enough to excite suspicion; and still more the discoveries that followed the explosion. In or near the same house a large quantity of cartridges was found. A manufacture of pikes and other weapons was detected. If this unexpected discovery had made a proper impression, and if the most obvious precautions had been taken, I cannot but believe that the tragical event which followed, might have been prevented. Private letters, of considerable authority, lament and complain of the supineness of government. In the face of such facts, I cannot readily give credit to the accounts we have repeatedly heard in this House, of the general tranquillity which prevails over Ireland, and of the contented and peaceable temper of the natives. It is not natural, it is not credible, that all the causes of the opposite disposition should have been so readily forgotten, or that that disposition should have been so very soon extinguished. By fatal experience we are sure of the contrary. If it be said that the two kingdoms are united under one parliament, I ask in return, are the hearts of the Irish people united to Great Britain? If not, the union is a formality, and nothing else. The case is urgent indeed; I know of nothing that approaches to it in the magnitude of its consequences, if a real and effective course be not taken to prevent them. Nominal relief and speculative concessions will not convince the suffering majority of that people, that they really enjoy the same privileges, the same equality of government with ourselves, and that they are truly, and in fact as well as name, one nation with the English. Some days ago an hon. gentleman (Mr. Corry) proposed, and the House immediately granted, fifty thousand pounds to build churches in Ireland, and houses for the Protestant clergy to reside in. Where they have hitherto resided he did not mention. I then took the occasion to throw out an idea, which has long been revolving in my mind, and which I know prevails with several of my countrymen, and others much better acquainted with the internal state of Ireland than I am. I do not believe that what is yet left to make the emancipation of the Roman Catholics complete, is much regarded by the majority of that persuasion. The benefit of what remains to be done would reach but to a few. The condition of the rest would be very little mended by total emancipation, unless it were accompanied, as it ought to be, by other concessions. One of the principal grievances of the Roman Catholics, and heavy it is indeed on all ranks of that part of the Irish people, from him, who has something like a house and cloaths to cover him, to the naked wretch, who pines and starves with a family of beggars in a mud cottage, is the cruelty and oppression of forcing them to pay double tithes for the support of two ecclesiastical establishments. The united legislature of the empire has it now in its power to give that essential relief, which the justice of the case demands, but which it would have been in vain to expect from an Irish parliament. I submit the measure, for its reason and its prudence, to the consideration of his majesty's ministers. I urge it on their attention, for its indispensable necessity. On the subject of Ireland I shall venture to offer you one salutary suggestion more, and with that I shall conclude. In all human dealing, particularly in acts of justice or benevolence, the form and the manner are as effective as the substance. The benefit is doubled, when it comes through a favourite channel. If the French are determined to attempt an invasion, their object, with any rational prospect of success, must be Ireland. Your military force in that country may be great; but there is a moral power of defence and security, which armies cannot give you. You have it within your reach, if you are wise enough to make use of it. The service to be done points out the person to be employed. To recover the affections of Ireland, there does not exist, the world does not furnish so powerful an instrument as the illustrious prince, to whose name and character I have alluded. That any heart, which he wishes to win, should resist him — I do not believe it possible. If with those personal qualifications, so eminently possessed by him, and so peculiarly suited to the occasion, he were allowed to carry with him the justice, or, if you will, the mercy of the legislature to the Catholics of that unhappy country, from that moment the union would be realised. The hearts of the people would gather round him. Alienation and despair would be converted into affection, and the whole power of the country be devoted to its defence.

Sir *F. Burdett*, alluding to an expres-

Digitized by Google

sion of col. Craufurd's, that the prince of Wales had offered his services, and that his offer had been rejected, stated his regret that such rejection should have occurred; as at such a period as the present, the character of his royal highness would furnish a tower of strength to the country. The hon. baronet recommended the appointment of a military commission, and concluded with complaining of the general misrepresentations of his sentiments.

Sir *W. Erskine* approved of the idea of a military commission.

Mr. *Fox* moved an amendment, in support of which he stated, that the greatest abilities on earth, even those of the duke of Marlborough, would not be sufficient for the extent of the duties to which a commander in chief's attention must necessarily be directed at the present crisis. The words of his amendment were, "That an address be presented to his majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to appoint a military council, consisting of general officers, and such others as to his majesty should seem fit, for the purpose of giving their advice when called upon by his majesty respecting the defence of the country, and of being consulted occasionally, or from day to day, if necessary, by the commander in chief, and his majesty's ministers upon that important subject." He could not conceive why the services of the heir apparent had been refused. Was his royal highness too old? Was he too young? Was he made a colonel twenty-two years ago, by way of douceur, as a little pecuniary aid? Was he not known to be in the very prime of life, at the very period when man was capable of the utmost energy? The country, he added, had a right to expect some explanation upon this subject.

Mr. *Tyrwhitt*, of the prince's household, said:—An illustrious personage, in whose family I have the honour to be placed, having been so directly alluded to, I can no longer be silent. The Prince, from the very commencement of the war, has manifested an anxious wish to be placed in any military situation to which his majesty might be pleased to call him; which wish has been made known to his majesty's ministers. If the services of the illustrious personage alluded to have been rejected, I have proof that the fault does not lie at his door.

Mr. *Barham* strongly urged the propriety of giving a military command to the heir apparent.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said: No man is more ready to bear attestation to the feelings so worthy of the rank and character of the illustrious personage alluded to than I am. But having made this declaration, I must here pause, and declare, that nothing short of the commands of the king shall compel me to say one word more upon the subject.

Mr. *Windham* strongly enforced the necessity of a council of war, and thought at all events the Prince should have a command.

General *Maitland* spoke against the motion, and maintained that there was a council of war to all intents and purposes now existing.

Mr. *Calcraft* was for the council. He spiritedly observed: the Prince of Wales has been a colonel in the army from the year 1782; his brother is a field marshal and commander in chief; three younger brothers are lieutenant-generals; and you leave the heir apparent to the monarchy to fight for that crown which he is one day to wear, as a colonel of a regiment, under the command of a major-general, his own equerry.

Colonel Craufurd having withdrawn his motion; and the motion for the other orders of the day being also withdrawn, the House divided on Mr. Fox's motion:

Tellers.

Yeas	Col. Craufurd	38
	Mr. Sheridan	
Noes	Mr. Secretary at War ...	63
	General Maitland.....	

So it passed in the negative.

Debate on Mr. Sheridan's Motion for a Vote of Thanks to the Volunteers.] Aug. 10. Mr. *Sheridan* rose to make his promised motion relative to the Volunteers. He said, it was of a nature which he flattered himself would meet the approbation of every man in the House: and he trusted that whatever zeal of opposition had been manifested on other occasions, there might at least be one cordial day before their separation—one day in which every consideration was lost sight of but devotion to the cause of our common country. In bringing forward the motion, he had no wish to interfere with what more strictly was the duty of the servants of the crown; but he could not but think that a motion such as he had to propose

Digitized by Google

came with peculiar propriety from an individual who appeared in that House as a volunteer in the cause of this country. Before he proceeded, he wished it to be distinctly understood that his motion was intended to include every description of individuals whose services were voluntarily offered at this difficult and trying crisis. It would include volunteer corps, corps of yeomanry, and corps which were raised by patriotic gentlemen, and accepted by government. There were one or two points on which he wished to say a very few words. At present there existed some degree of doubt respecting the proper construction of the clauses of the bill for the general defence of the country; and also of the bill by which some ambiguities were meant to be removed. It was not sufficiently understood how far a voluntary offer to enter into a corps, previously accepted by his majesty, would exempt the individuals making this offer from the compulsory operation of the bills to which he had just now referred. It was the clear spirit of the act, that when any individual entered into a corps of the nature which he had described, he was henceforth freed from the operation of all the compulsory clauses of the act. The next point on which he wished to make a few observations was, the mode in which many volunteer associations conducted their cloathing. It could not have escaped notice that many thousand individuals, whose loyalty was undoubted, were prevented from entering into volunteer associations, from the heavy expense to which a gaudy fashionable dress would expose them. If the cloathing were more cheap, thousands whom no consideration but that which he had mentioned now deterred, would flock to the standard of loyalty. He could not but think that gentlemen in affluent circumstances would do themselves infinite honour by appearing in the plainest dress possible. It was not idle pomp or tawdry magnificence which was to entitle members of a volunteer association to the confidence of their country. In this trying crisis we were to look for salvation to fortitude, to heroism, to contempt of death. He rejoiced to find that a military disposition pervaded the land, and he wished that the effect might be visible in a general military appearance in the country. In Ireland, when the system of volunteers, carried to an extraordinary pitch, left a greater proportion of the regular troops disposable for foreign service, every man was to be seen in his uniform. At that period, every member of the Irish House of Commons appeared in the dress of his appropriate association; and the gallery exhibited an equally military appearance. The public officers of state imitated the example, and even the grave judges on the bench, under his professional gown, exhibited a uniform. He could not but think that the adoption of a similar practice would be productive of the most beneficial effects. Even if it had no other effect but to point out those who were lukewarm and disaffected, it might be productive of infinite advantage. As to the spot where volunteer associations were to be trained, the places allotted for this purpose should, in the first instance, be as secluded as possible. He needed not to remind the House that there were many individuals who would much more cheerfully expose themselves to the shot of the enemy than encounter the derision of motley spectators. Before he sat down, he begged leave to advert to some other considerations connected with the subject immediately before the House. No man had seen with greater pleasure than he had, the patriotic donations of which the gentlemen at Lloyd's coffee-house had set so illustrious an example. He confessed that liberal as the subscription already was, it was with surprise that he still observed the absence of several classes of the community which he expected to have seen the first on the list. He had no wish to say any thing harsh respecting the noble and honourable persons of whom those classes were composed. Though they had not yet come forward with their contributions, he had no doubt that they would not be deficient in devotion to their country at this trying moment, and that though they had not taken the lead, they would not show themselves deficient in generosity in so sacred a cause. When he looked to the amount of the fund at this moment, and when he considered how much greater it might become by the contributions of those classes to which he had referred, he could not help thinking that it might admit of a more extended application. Though originally designed solely to afford aid to the wives and relatives of those who perished while fighting their country's battles, it did appear to him that so large a fund, instead of remaining unapplied, might, to a certain extent, be employed

Digitized by Google

in contributing to the direct service of the country. Rewards might be offered to those who were willing to volunteer the performance of important national services, and who might be deterred merely by the consideration that in their absence their families would remain without a provision. He would allude to another source of assistance; he meant the patriotic contributions of our fair country women. In a contest involving the preservation of all the charities and all the endearments of domestic life, he could not believe that they would be backward in patriotism. To their other charms he was confident they would add the charm of love to their country and their homes. —The hon. gentleman then proceeded to advert to the description of the force, to the individuals composing which his vote of thanks would be addressed. He was no military man, and professed no power to give the House information on the subject. In the course of many discussions which had lately taken place, it had however frequently occurred to him, that many of these details might have been well spared, whether proceeding from military or unmilitary members of the House. He must, in the face of authorities deservedly high in a military point of view, say, that, as a constitutional member of parliament, he thought the force which was now formed for the defence of the country one in which he was warranted in placing the amplest confidence. Military men were too apt to view every object with what they were pleased to call a military eye; but, with all their minuteness of observation, they were very apt to overlook one little fortress, which he should never cease to think of the highest importance, and that was the fortress of the constitution. If he were asked, whether he did not think a hundred thousand regular troops a more effectual body for the defence of the country than an equal number of militia, volunteers, and yeomanry, he certainly could have no difficulty in giving his answer. Undoubtedly, for every military purpose, such a regular force was superior. He would maintain, however, that in addition to a regular army of a certain magnitude, a force, consisting of militia, volunteers, and yeomanry, was a force more suited to the habits, the circumstances, the constitutional liberties of this country. In saying this he did not speak of an army for the purpose of carrying on a continental war, but a force such as it behoved us to keep up when the necessity of cultivating military habits was more imperiously imposed on us by the ambition of a foreign enemy, whom nothing could satisfy short of our destruction. He liked the force the better, because it was of a diversified character. In the first instance the preference was given to the regular troops; the militia, the volunteer corps, and the yeomanry succeeded in their claims to distinction. There was in in such a force a connexion which must ever make it formidable to a foreign enemy. There was in its compositions a facility for separation, which, in a constitutional view, he should always regard with satisfaction. Great standing armies, however disciplined and powerful, were not to be implicitly trusted. He might refer to numerous examples in proof of this position. A most striking instance occurred in the army of France. Never was there an army better disciplined, more brave, or apparently more dependent on the throne; but that very army thus constituted, and on which every possible reliance was placed, in the course of a very few hours suffered the monarchy to be overturned, and the revolution to triumph. In making this allusion, it was the farthest in the world from his intention to impeach the loyalty of our regular army. On the contrary, he believed that no body of men were ever animated with truer or more affectionate attachment to their sovereign. He admired, however, the present constitution of our military force, as being exempted from the inconveniences and the evils which attached, to a certain degree, to all standing, exclusive, permanent armies. By such a constitution, the strength and efficiency of the whole was confirmed and consolidated. He liked the present attitude of the country, whether we looked forward to the continuance of war, or to the conclusion of peace.—On the subject of peace he should just say one word. He should be the ready advocate of peace, if it could be obtained on terms consistent with the national honour and safety. This, however, he would distinctly say, and he was sure that he spoke the language of his majesty's ministers when he made the declaration, that no peace could be formed, no negotiation could be listened to, no offer for negotiation could be accepted, while there was a hostile army in any part of the united empire. If he had

Digitized by Google

supposed it possible for ministers to have entertained contrary sentiments, he should have felt it his duty to have brought forward a distinct proposition, that the minister who should listen to so disgraceful a proposition, would deserve to be impeached, and to lose his head as the punishment of his infamy. He stated it distinctly, therefore, as what he conceived was the unalterable resolution of ministers, that no proposal for peace should be entertained, while a single French soldier had a footing on British ground. [This sentiment was universally applauded.]—The hon. gentleman, after this patriotic effusion, went on to recommend unanimity on this interesting occasion. He did not call on gentlemen to give up their opinions. He did not wish by any means to dictate to them the course of political conduct which they were to pursue. Within the walls of that House every man had a fair right fully and unequivocally to declare his opinions on public affairs. He might be permitted, however, to entreat of gentlemen, that as the period of their separation was now at hand, they would not utter such sentiments out of doors; that they would not resort to any measures which could damp the increasing ardour and energy of the country; that they would not lend the sanction of their names to sentiments which, coming from unauthorized sources, had never been received with any portion of favour. All that he asked of them was, to suspend their political animosities for a moment; not to represent the servants of the crown as weak and inefficient, at a moment when confidence in their exertions was so necessary to the salvation of the country; not to waste that time, and those talents in party spirit and intrigue, which might be so much more worthily employed in performing the sublime and animated duties of patriotism. This was a moment which called on every honest man to unite heart and hand in support of all that is dear to us as a great and free people, against the greatest danger with which we were ever threatened. Let but this small sacrifice be made to patriotism, and when they once more assembled in that House, they might resume their favourite pursuits, under the pleasing consciousness, that they had contributed their efforts to the general safety. The hon. gentleman then moved, "That the Thanks of this House be given to the several Volunteer and Yeomanry corps of the United Kingdom, for the zeal and promptitude with which, at a crisis the most momentous to their country, they have associated for its defence."

General *Gascoyne* hoped that the motion would be unanimously adopted. He thought, now that our regular army was so powerfully supported by the militia, and 300,000 volunteers, we should remove the seat of war out of our own dominions, and learn to threaten the threatener: we ought no longer to confine ourselves merely to defensive operations.

Mr. *Windham* wished it were in his power to gratify the hon. mover; but while the hon. gentleman deprecated discussion, he threw out so many things to provoke it, that it was impossible his wish could be complied with. If the hon. gentleman imagined he was going to oppose the vote, he was mistaken. It was among the fancies of the hon. gentleman that he had spoken with disparagement of the militia and the volunteer corps. With respect to the volunteer corps, he had not a doubt of their zeal and spirit; and he was satisfied that in the day of trial they would serve their country in a way becoming Englishmen. He had said nothing to give offence to the militia. The whole amount of what he had said was, that with all the zeal and spirit which he always allowed them, they did not possess those qualities of soldiers which it was impossible to possess without having been in action. With respect to the motion, it was one to which a man was induced to give his assent, because he could not dissent without disapproving. He had no objection to a vote of thanks. It was here in some instances, as in public places, where one joined in the applause, because he could make no other noise which would not have the effect of censure. But, if he were to speak as a volunteer, he should say, "For God's sake, keep your thanks till we have done something to deserve them." It should be considered, that the volunteer corps were but just formed, and that many had chosen volunteer service to avoid compulsory service. It should be recollected, that at other times we had had volunteers, who had come forward without any influence or compulsion, and that no thought was entertained of bestowing on them, in the first instance, a vote like that now proposed. All that the House of Commons had to give to the most distinguished services by sea and land was its thanks; and when volunteer

Digitized by Google

corps were to receive those thanks for coming forward at such a crisis, with a service which they would otherwise be compelled to render, he feared that the highest and most valuable testimony of the most eminent service, would become less valuable. He should think it the proper time to vote the thanks of the House when they had expelled Buonaparté, or even now he should think it right to thank the Irish volunteers, for suppressing the rebellion; and when the House was called upon for such a vote, he thought there should at least have been some direction from his majesty. Here he should leave this subject; but there was another on which he should say a few words, and here he should lay the ground for this privilege under the prohibition of the hon. mover. The hon. gentleman's wish went to deprive the House of its most valuable functions: when no one was allowed to speak, no one could hear! and when no one was allowed to illumine, no one could be enlightened. This doctrine was rather new, and in his opinion, not very wise. He wished the hon. gentleman had been in the House when his hon. friend (Mr. Fox) had so properly exerted his abilities on a subject somewhat related to this on a former night. He condemned the principle of having recourse to volunteer corps instead of calling forth volunteer service in other modes. From the sort of training which these corps received, there was an opportunity of judging of the manner in which they would be brought into action. The companies would be collected into regiments, and the regiments formed into brigades. He did not think they would be good for any thing in that way; neither did he think, that any judicious officer would accept of them. It was not true that numbers always made strength; neither could that other comfortable saying, that if they did no good they could do no harm, be applied in this instance. They would incumber the movements, obstruct the roads, and consume the provisions—and, which should also be a main consideration, they would be a great depository of panic, if, as was not unlikely, they once caught it. Under all these disadvantages, any skilful officer, instead of accepting their services, would rather say, place them at a distance. Such an officer would consider them as a wrestler would regard heavy garments, and say, let me have clear ground, free from any incumbrance. An armed population, when it was once trained, would furnish out of it corps more generally useful, and whose services and co-operation the best officers would think desirable. He regarded as the most essential instrument of defence a force like this, possessed of all the characteristics of a loose light infantry; quick in loading and firing. When the population of the country was thus trained, every where that the enemy moved, a host would hang on him, and follow him like a swarm of insects, for ever buzzing in his ears, for ever teasing, harassing, and annoying him. If, combined with this force, we had the advantage of fortifications, the utility of which had been so strongly enforced by the hon. colonel behind him (Craufurd), and large armies, for large armies we should have, the fate of the country would not depend on one or two pitched battles; but it would be one continued warfare, in which every inch of ground would be disputed both in advance and in retreat. This was his opinion as to the proper mode of executing the measure of general armament. If the idea had been taken up which he suggested, a large force would by this time have been half trained, and nearly ready to be applied to the services for which it may be thought advisable. There were some measures in which a great progress might be made at the very commencement, and others in which no progress could be made for a long time. This measure of general armament was one of the latter description, in which, though much had been done in parliament, no progress was yet made in fact. It was like a July brewing, which, with the delay of fermenting, drawing off, and bottling, would not be fit to drink till Christmas. His majesty's ministers were fond of clatter, and they thought that the machinery he recommended would do nothing, because it was silent. He considered it a very great absurdity to suppose, that what was known to every man in England was unknown to the government of France, he meant the actual state of preparation in which we were. On the mere question of the vote of thanks he had nothing to say, and therefore should do no more than to press most seriously the consideration of providing this force with arms; for without a proper attention to the state in which it was as to arms, no effectual aid could be expected from it. The hon. gentleman

Digitized by Google

wished for unanimity, and in one sense he would have it. If unanimity was meant to apply to the defence of the country, there could be no doubt that this unanimity existed. He should wish to know what part of his conduct had embarrased the public service, or given ground for the charge of factious opposition; and when he and those gentlemen who sat near him, were charged with such things, he wished the instances to be cited. He had the satisfaction to think that most of those measures onwhich he and his friends took an active part, were rendered more perfect in their passage towards the House, and that he and his friends contributed to the improvement. He also disclaimed the charge of factious opposition. He had not opposed all things indiscriminately. He had never once opposed a tax bill though he knew gentlemen in another opposition, who, during the course of ten years, never suffered a tax bill to pass without comment.—It was a bad thing to have a government in which the country could not confide; if it was true that the present government was such, the country should know it. If it was untrue, the attempt to establish the belief would give room for the refutation. It was worse than all to have a weak government and to confide in it; for then the country leaned on a broken reed, which would certainly let it down. When a government regulated itself by public opinion, the proper way to correct it was, to apply the correction through the public opinion, to which it looked up so much. He denied the principle, that because a government was under difficulties, it was therefore to be the more relied on. The increase of danger naturally created unanimity. The rebellion in Ireland had created a unanimity of this kind, and a French invasion would create it still more. He, therefore, protested against an unanimity which would go to preclude the right of censure, and when this was the last day of discussion, and there would be no other opportunity till the next session, he thought it his duty to avail himself of this right; and as the hon. gentleman proposed to carry his restriction still further, and to abridge the liberty of speech out of doors during the vacation, as he proposed to lock him and his friends up in this manner, and to put the key in his pocket;—he thought it proper at least to save their right, by his protest, lest it be considered as entirely lapsed and surrendered by disuse. Having said this, he had no objection that the motion should pass, and the hon. gentleman might if he pleased, go about as master of the ceremonies making his bow to every one of the corps, and returning them thanks where they were not at all expected.

The *Secretary at War* thought it strange, that the right hon. gentleman, who was such an advocate for a regular army, should prefer a much more imperfect training, to that which the volunteers would receive. He could not help wondering, that in the last war, the public should have heard none of the right hon. gentleman's objections to the militia and the volunteers. He was then secretary at war, and a cabinet minister; and it was his duty to have proposed those means of defence, that, in his judgment, appeared the best. In answer to the question, Why the thanks of parliament had not been given to those volunteers, who preserved Dublin from falling into the hands of the rebels? he should answer, Dublin never was in that dangerous situation, described by the right hon. gentleman, nor was it so much the volunteer force, as the regular army, that defeated the insurgents.

Mr. *Wilberforce* thought it a little premature to vote the thanks of the House to men, for merely doing what must be expected from Englishmen. He thought they ought to wait for solid services and more splendid achievements. In giving his opinion of the volunteer force in general, he appeared to coincide with Mr. Windham's idea, that the peasantry of the country, armed and acting as an irregular force, would be more efficacious. He thought it would give more room for the exercise and display of individual energy and courage. He instanced the wonderful and gallant exploits of sir Sidney Smith at Acre, and stated that that officer had declared, that if he had had any regular officers of engineers with him, he must have reported the place untenable and quitted it. He concluded by expressing a confidence that the country was equal to the situation it was placed in, and would finally triumph over all its difficulties.

Mr. *Francis* said, he hoped that the hon. mover had, before he pledged himself so warmly to the support of government, received sufficient satisfaction on two points about which he had been much interested: first, as to the appointment of

Digitized by Google

a military council; secondly, as to the offer of service on the part of an illustrious personage.

Colonel *Craufurd* thought that it would be time enough to return thanks to the volunteers, when they had repelled the invasion with which this country is threatened. He did not much approve of the introduction of German tactics among our volunteers; he thought there was too much of it among the regulars, and that it was not well suited to such a country as this: he agreed with Mr. Windham, in preferring the people raised *en masse* and acting as an irregular force, to our volunteers, in the way they are trained and disciplined.

Lord *Hawkesbury* cordially approved of the vote proposed, as he thought the record of it on the Journals, would be an encouragement to future exertions.

Mr. *Sheridan* made a brilliant reply to the arguments against his motion, which he had supposed would have past unanimously, and without much discussion. As to the questions put to him by Mr. Francis, he said, that neither the non-appointment of a military council, nor even the rejection of the offer of the prince of Wales, to whom he was so much attached, were sufficient to prevent him giving his support to the government, at a time so critical as the present. He believed the prince's feelings might be expressed in the language of lord Moira, who said he should rather serve as a private in the ranks, than divide the public opinion about his claims, when unanimity was so essentially necessary. He then animadverted, with severity, on the tendency of the speeches which had been delivered in that House, by Mr. Windham and his friends.

The motion was agreed to *nem. con.* As well also the following, "That a return be prepared, to be laid before this House in the next Session of Parliament, of all Volunteer and Yeomanry corps whose services shall have been accepted by his Majesty, describing each corps in order that such return may be entered on the Journals of this House, and the patriotic example of such voluntary exertions transmitted to posterity."

Debate on Mr. Hutchinson's Motion respecting the State of Ireland.] August 11. Mr. *Hutchinson* rose, to submit a motion relative to the affairs of Ireland. He began by stating how material it was in the present juncture to enable his majesty to avail himself of all the resources which every part of the empire was capable of affording, and how desirable it therefore was, to put Ireland in such a situation as to make her natural strength her wealth, and population available for the common safety of the empire. The unanimity which appeared in this country was a source of joy to every loyal mind; but the joy of an Irishman was considerably allayed, by the reflexion that so many of his countrymen were, by the oppression they endured, by the wretched poverty they suffered, damped in their ardour for the public security, if not altogether alienated in their affections for the British government. To remedy this misfortune, he called upon ministers to attend to the state of Ireland, and to reform radically the system by which it had been so long governed. He called upon parliament to consider this subject, and upon ministers to recollect the solemn pledges made to the Irish people at the time of the union. The hon. member then entered into a comparison of the systems on which the government of the two countries was managed, and contended that they were essentially different—the people of England enjoying the privileges of the constitution, and the advantages and profits of industry, to both of which the people of Ireland were almost entire strangers; for the Revolution of 1688, which gave liberty to the former cramped the industry of the latter, and laid the foundation of the discords which had since desolated that unhappy country. Under the beneficent reign of his present majesty, the greater part of the penalties which disgraced the Statute book, as applying to the difference of religious sentiments, had been expunged, but so long as any part of this vicious system was suffered to exist, it would be idle to calculate on the peace of Ireland. If any doubt was entertained of the melancholy situation of Ireland, let a deputation be appointed by the House to investigate the state of the poor, and to report their opinion to parliament after the recess. This was one of the means to which ministers ought to resort, to put parliament in possession of the most authentic information. The residence of the land owners in Ireland ought by some means to be enforced, at least some branch of each family. If the just expectations of the people of Ireland were satisfied, we should be qualified to

Digitized by Google

despise the menaces of the insatiable despot, by whose machinations alone the horrible atrocity lately committed in Dublin was to be attributed. That any part of his countrymen could be so deluded as to trust to the professions of such a tyrant, or count upon any good to their country through his interference, was to him a source of the most sincere regret; but of this delusion he trusted that the benevolent interpositions of this House would cure them. It might be said, that ministers had it in contemplation to bring forward a better system for Ireland, but that it was not yet prepared. The case, however, did not admit of delay. From the time that the late minister had accomplished the union, nothing had been done to render that measure complete. To him, as an English minister, it certainly was a great object to attain; if he really did not mean to propose some conciliatory measures, he must have been either a blockhead or a knave: but it was understood that he did. The present minister, however, had shown no disposition to do any such thing. The hon. member proceeded to describe the happy consequences which would result from the appointment of the Prince of Wales to the lord lieutenancy of Ireland. If his majesty would give this farther proof of his parental attachment to his Irish subjects, and his royal highness would condescend to accept of it, his character, which was in still higher estimation than his high rank, would excite a degree of unparalleled enthusiasm throughout all Ireland. The disposition of this illustrious personage, and his known attachment to the Irish people, would naturally enough produce such a sentiment—but there was little hope that they would have the happiness of his Royal Highness's presence. The same evil genius which prevented his Royal Highness from being called into employment when the empire was pronounced in danger, would, no doubt interpose its baneful influence, to preclude Ireland from enjoying this felicity. If any commotion should take place in Ireland during the recess, the hon. member recommended government to meet it with vigour; but exhorted them to send positive orders, that no cruelty should be practised, that vigour should be blended with humanity; that the measures which the loyalists resorted to in 1798, should not be allowed, for they would only tend to create thousands of rebels. He hoped they would never again occur, and that we should hear no more of houseburnings, of pillages, or tortures! [hear, hear.] There were some gentlemen who doubted that such tortures had ever taken place, and that there were some who denied it altogether; but he would refer such persons to the authority of lord Cornwallis, who humanely and wisely put a stop to that horrid practice, and to the noble lord (Castlereagh), who knew enough of the proceedings in Ireland, and who had much to answer for his conduct in that country. But, if farther authority were wanting, he would refer to one of the last acts of the last parliament of Ireland, which affixed to their character a most memorable badge of disgrace. The act to which he alluded was the indemnity bill, which extended protection to the sheriff of Tipperary, and other magistrates—a bill which cheated men of the verdicts for damages obtained in a court of justice; a bill which imposed upon the plaintiffs in actions the necessity of proving that the magistrates, against whom such actions were brought, were not actuated in the conduct charged against them by a wish to put down rebellion. He concluded with moving, "That an humble address be presented to his majesty, praying that he will be graciously pleased to direct that there be laid before this House such information as has been received respecting the late rebellious outrages in Ireland, and the present state of that part of the united kingdom."

Lord *Hawkesbury* considering the state of affairs abroad, the great measures adopting at home, and the number of members gone to the different places which most immediately required their presence, to give effect to the very measures which parliament had adopted, could not help saying, that this motion was highly inexpedient. If the motion were adopted, it could not meet with that investigation which the subject would necessarily demand. He had no idea of resisting any application for information to that House; but then, the information must be asked for on the ground that it was to be followed up by some practical proceeding for the benefit of Ireland, which could not be the case in the present state of the session. He saw nothing in this motion which tended to be of any advantage to Ireland. The possible effect of agreeing to it was that of unhinging the minds of the people. He had no difficulty

Digitized by Google

in saying, that motions founded upon alleged grievances should never be assented to, unless those who stated the grievances were provided with some remedy for them. He did not believe that those which were stated to be the cause of the evils of Ireland had any connexion with them, nor did he believe that some of the remedies which had been mentioned would have the effect of removing these evils. He thought the motion pregnant with evil and should resist it.

Mr. *Elliot* said, that if no person of greater weight than himself had undertaken it, he should have felt it his duty to have brought this subject under the contemplation of the House previous to the close of the session. Had he been in his place when the king's message was debated; he should have concurred in the measures adopted by the House, because he thought the emergency required promptitude and decision: at the same time, he should have felt that he voted partly on a compulsory and temporary confidence in the declarations of ministers, and partly on the intelligence contained in private letters from Ireland: for there never was so grave a parliamentary proceeding taken on such a paucity of parliamentary information. The only parliamentary document that had accompanied his majesty's message was, the lord lieutenant's proclamation, which stated, that lord Kilwarden and his nephew had been murdered, and that there had been rebellious outrages in some of the streets of Dublin; but it did not mention that the king's troops had been fired upon, or that concealed communications and treasonable proclamations had been discovered; nor did it specify any circumstance which indicated a rebellious confederacy of so wide and extensive a nature as could justify so violent an encroachment on the constitution as the Martial law bill. There were, however, other reasons which induced him to deprecate the separation of parliament, without a due knowledge of the present state of Ireland; one was, the inauspicious ignorance which ministers had manifested in respect to the affairs of that country. He was afraid, too, there had been some very reprehensible remissness on the part of the executive government of Ireland. He had heard that intelligence had, for several weeks before the late outrages in Dublin been offered to the Irish government, stating indications of the existence of a treasonable confederacy in the country, but that such communications had been treated with indifference. In fact, the Irish government had been, in spite of the multiplied intimations they had received, completely surprised. The garrison had been so little prepared, that the troops from the barracks did not reach the part of the town, in which the rising happened until some hours after the commencement of the tumult, and the insurrection was suppressed entirely by the exertions of a volunteer corps, called the Liberty Rangers, and a very small detachment of the 21st regiment, which happened to be in the quarter of the city, where the commotion began. He must add, too, that the volunteers were very scantily supplied with ammunition. Under these circumstances, it would not be decent to suffer the session to terminate without calling for information. He repeated, that he thought the House ought to have the information: 1st, to justify itself for the measures it had lately passed; 2ndly, because there had been supineness on the part, both of the English and Irish government; and 3dly, because it was the duty of parliament to possess itself of the actual state of Ireland.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, there was manifestly in this motion great danger, if the House should comply with it; for if government brought forward the information called for, the statement would present to the House a partial account, upon which they could not judge fairly. The House would therefore not require, because it would not determine, upon information that was imperfect. There was no ground for this motion by way of reference to former proceedings. On the former occasion, the House had acted on his motion for the renewal of martial law in Ireland; the ground on which he urged that subject was, the immediate danger; but he rested it on the foundation of a precautionary system. There were no arguments at that time on the subject of the production of all information in the hands of government; the argument then was an argument upon the inconvenience of delay, and parliament thought they best discharged their duty by granting that power to government for a short period, and leaving the matter to be re-considered when the time should expire. His hon. friend had accused the government of Ireland of not taking measures of precaution. Now, the amount of the daily

Digitized by Google

guard in Dublin was very great. There was nothing in the nature of the rebellion in Thomas-street, that demanded more force than the government had brought against the rebels. There was no proof that the arrangements made by government on that occasion were not adequate to the protecting of the city.—As to the censure which had been cast on the executive government or parliament of Ireland, he considered that that parliament had shown itself as jealous of public liberty as any body of men had ever been, under circumstances similar to theirs. The clause inserted in an act of parliament for the protection of the magistrates who had suppressed the rebellion, was a just and wise one. In some cases there had been excess of authority, and actions were brought by persons who had suffered by such excesses. Juries adopted in some cases a wrong rule of decision; which was, to call on the defendant in such actions to show the cause of his conduct, and to find a verdict against him if he could not do so to their satisfaction. This introduced a complication of hardships upon magistrates, from the death of witnesses, and a thousand other circumstances incident to a rebellion. Parliament, therefore, enacted, that the court should call on the plaintiff to prove the *malus animus* of the defendant before a verdict should pass against him; and this he maintained was an act of justice. The noble lord proceeded to defend the government of lord Camden and lord Cornwallis, and observed, that they were remarkable for lenity; that the military power had never been employed, except where the civil power had been tried in vain. As to outrages, there had been many on both sides, but there never was a rebellion without them. The distress of Ireland as well as the disposition to rebellion, had been much exaggerated. No power in Europe had made more rapid strides in wealth and general happiness for the last fifteen years, than that part of the British empire had done. The hon. gentleman did not state the proposition which should follow the discussion; but even if he had, what means were there, at this instant, of carrying that proposition into effect? It would be useless to talk of grievances without showing what they specifically were, where they were to be found, or what the remedies for them were, and that at a moment like the present,

Mr. *Windham* thought the motion, the information sought, and the observations made by the hon. mover, were not of a nature to do any mischief; but that, on the contrary, much good must result from it. The government of Ireland appeared to him, in spite of repeated warnings, to have suffered itself to be completely surprised. He denied that the merit of putting down the rebellion, belonged principally to the regulars; it was the volunteers, assisted only by the 21st regiment, who put down the rebellion. The plot of the rebels, was as extensive in its confederacy, as sudden in its execution; and if it had not happened that some of the insurgents were intoxicated, and that lord Kilwarden passed that way before the time fixed for their acting, he thought it probable, that the insurgents would have carried the castle of Dublin. He then defended generally, the tenor of his speeches, during the session. He was accused of alarming and frightening the people of this country; but it was in vain to attempt to rouse people to defend themselves, without pointing out the danger.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* accused the right hon. gentleman of himself showing that tardiness and indecision which he imputed to others, when on a former day he hesitated to vote the customary address of thanks to his majesty, for the communication respecting Ireland. On such an occasion as that, delay would have been ruinous; and yet the right hon. gentleman was for delay. As to the general state of Ireland, it would be foolish to suppose, that that spirit which had before manifested itself in rebellion so widely extended, should now be completely extinguished; yet he believed it had abated considerably of its violence, and that numbers of persons, in that country, who were formerly disaffected, had now entirely quitted the cause of rebellion, and would be ready to join in the defence of the country, against any invader.

Dr. *Laurence* said, he considered the motion to be perfectly proper, and contended that the government of Ireland had suffered itself to be surprised. He did not object to the measures which had been adopted with regard to Ireland; he only complained that they had been adopted without sufficient information having been laid before parliament. He repeated the charge against ministers, of procrastination in their measures for the public security. If the information called

Digitized by Google

for could be granted with safety, he hoped it would not be refused.

The *Attorney General* said, that the only practicable means of carrying the motion into effect would be, to address the king not to prorogue parliament; a measure which he did not suppose any gentleman would recommend at a period, when the presence of gentlemen was so necessary in the country. It had been said, that a committee might be appointed to sit during the prorogation, for the purpose of examining into the state of Ireland. But the only way in which such a committee could be instituted was, by an act of parliament: and he would venture to say, there was not a precedent for such a measure on the Journals of the House. There were besides great constitutional difficulties in the way of such a measure; because a committee so constituted would be independent of the power of the House, and of the prerogative of the crown. The hon. gentleman had recommended this, in order to show the people of Ireland the vigilance with which their affairs were attend to. But it would show a strange kind of vigilance to agree to a measure of this kind on the last day of a session, when it could not be attended with any practical good effect.

Earl *Temple* said, he should support the motion, because he thought it important to know whether government was in possession of information sufficient to enable them to act decisively sooner than they had done. Adverting to the occurrences which had taken place in Dublin, he observed, if government had previous information of what was going forward, they ought to be brought to a severe account for it. Had they in such a case speedily come forward with vigour and decision, the life of lord Kilwarden, and many others, might have been saved. He censured the precautions taken by the government of Ireland for the security of its capital, as inadequate and insecure.

Mr. *Hutchinson*, in reply, defended his motion upon the grounds of the necessity that existed to examine the situation of Ireland. He still retained the same sentiments with respect to the act of indemnity which had been passed by the Irish parliament. Dreadful enormities had been committed by several persons during the last rebellion under the mask of law. When the injured parties afterwards brought their actions, this law was pleaded, in order to screen the offenders from the punishment due to their crimes. When he brought forward his motion, his intention was, to call the attention of government to the affairs of Ireland. He did not now expect a system, but merely wished that ministers should turn their attention to the subject. He had not the most distant idea of throwing any reflexion on the present government of Ireland. As far as he had had an opportunity to observe the conduct of lord Hardwicke, there never was a lord lieutenant more calculated to conciliate the affections of the people. To say that the state of Ireland ought to be inquired into, could not have a tendency to excite rebellion. On the contrary it must have a completely opposite effect. He contended, that the rebellion had nothing to do with religion. Most of the leaders were Protestants, and the first seeds were sown in the north, where the number of Catholics was less than in the south. He adverted to the emancipations of the Catholics, for which he had voted in the Irish parliament; but he would not have started that subject, if it had not been done before. He concluded by observing, that unless some dispositions were shown to conciliate Ireland, it would be humanity at once to annihilate it.

The motion was negatived.

The Speaker's Speech to the King on presenting the Money Bills.] August 12. His Majesty came this day in state to the House of Peers, when the usher of the Black Rod was sent to command the immediate attendance of the Commons; who forthwith appeared at the bar.

Mr. Speaker *Abbot* then addressed his majesty as follows:

"Most gracious Sovereign;

"Your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the knights, citizens, and burgesses, of the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in parliament assembled, have at length completed the supplies granted to your majesty for the service of the present year—a period memorable for the events which it has produced, and awful for those which may be yet to come.

"In granting those supplies, your majesty's faithful Commons have considered that a crisis without example, demanded unexampled efforts, and, by resolving to raise annually a large proportion of the supplies for the current year, so long as the war may endure, they have given to

Digitized by Google

all the world a solemn pledge of their inflexible determination to render public credit unassailable.

"They have also proceeded to revise the system of your majesty's permanent revenue. By consolidating the duties in each of its principal branches, they have simplified its operations, and at the same time they have endeavoured to render its pressure less burthensome, by regulating its mode of collection.

"The commercial interests of this country, to which our attention was called by your majesty's gracious commands at the commencement of the present session, have been maturely considered; and measures have been taken for affording material accommodations and facilities to mercantile transactions, by rendering our principal ports free for all nations to import, deposit, and re-export their merchandise, without toll or tax, unless voluntarily brought into our own market for home consumption.

"Nor have we forgotten to bestow our earnest and serious thoughts upon the safety and efficacy of our church establishment, in every part of the united kingdom. Upon this subject, as comprehending all that consecrates our rational hopes, morals, and policy, we have deliberated with peculiar care and anxiety; and we presume to believe, that the important laws which have been passed in aid of our church establishment will materially strengthen and gradually extend its influence through succeeding ages.

"But, Sire, these were cares and objects belonging to times of peace. Wise, politic, and desirable as they might be, nevertheless, called upon now by your majesty's commands, we have without hesitation turned all our thoughts and efforts to meet the renewal of war, persuaded that your majesty's paternal care preserved to us the blessings of peace so long as they could be retained with safety and honour, and confident that since they have been openly attacked, and the justice of our cause has been made manifest to the world, our appeal to arms will not be in vain.

"This war we see and know to be a war of no ordinary character. We feel that our religion, laws, and liberties, and existence as a nation, are put to the issue, and we have prepared for the contest accordingly. Besides the supplies of money, we have augmented, beyond all former example, every species of military force known in this country—we have met rebellion with prompt and necessary laws—and for the defence of a sovereign, endeared to us by long experience of his royal virtues, and commanding not our allegiance alone, but our hearts and affections, the whole nation has risen up in arms.

"May then the God of our Fathers go forth with us to battle, and bless our cause, and establish with victory that throne which we revere as the bulwark of our liberties; and so shall other nations at length learn, that a free, valiant, and united people is unconquerable, and able to set lasting bounds to an empire of violence, perfidy, and unrelenting ambition. To the bills which I have now humbly to present to your Majesty, your Commons with all humility, entreat your Majesty's royal assent."

The King's Speech at the Close of the Session.] After the royal assent had been given to the said bills, his Majesty delivered the following Speech to both Houses:

"My Lords and Gentlemen;

"I am at length enabled, by the state of public business, to release you from your long and laborious attendance in parliament. In closing the session, I have the utmost satisfaction in expressing the strong sense which I entertain of the zealous and unwearied regard for the welfare and honour of your country which has distinguished all your proceedings.

"During the continuance of peace, your conduct manifested the just view which you had taken of our actual situation and of the dangers against which you were peculiarly called upon to provide; and since the recurrence of hostilities, you have displayed an energy and promptitude which had never been surpassed, in the means which you have supplied for the defence of the country, and for the vigorous prosecution of the war.

"Your proceedings, in consequence of the late treasonable and atrocious occurrences in Ireland, will, I trust, have the effect of preventing any further interruption of its internal tranquillity; and of convincing my loyal subjects in that part of the united kingdom, that they may confidently rely on that protection to which they are so justly entitled.

"In the midst of the deliberations, which were occasioned by the immediate

Digitized by Google

exigency of the times, you have not been unmindful of other objects, to which I had directed your attention; and I have great satisfaction in observing that you have completed a system for consolidating the duties, and regulating the collection and management of the several branches of the revenue, and that you have adopted measures which are calculated to afford material accommodation to the mercantile part of the community, and to encourage and extend the navigation and commerce of my dominions.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons;

"I return you my particular thanks for the liberality and readiness with which you have granted the supplies for the public service. It is painful to me to reflect, that the means of necessary exertion cannot be provided without a heavy pressure upon my faithful people; but I cannot sufficiently applaud that wisdom and fortitude which have led you to overlook considerations of temporary inconvenience, for the purpose of preventing a large accumulation of debt during the continuance of the war. You may be assured that there shall be as strict an attention to economy on my part as may be consistent with those preparations and exertions which will be best calculated to frustrate the designs, and to weaken the power of the enemy, by whose arrogant pretensions and restless ambition alone these sacrifices have been rendered unavoidable.

"My Lords; and Gentlemen,

"I am fully persuaded that, during the cessation of your parliamentary duties, you will continue to be actuated by the same spirit which has been uniformly displayed in your councils. It will be your duty to assist in carrying into effect those important measures which your wisdom has matured for the defence and security of the realm; and particularly to give the most beneficial direction to that ardour and enthusiasm in the cause of their country which animate all classes of my people.

"Justly sensible of the state of pre-eminence in which it has pleased the Almighty to support us for so many ages amongst the nations of Europe, I rely with confidence that, under the continuance of his Divine protection, the exertions of my brave and loyal subjects will prove to the enemy and to the world, that an attempt to subvert the independence, or impair the power, of this united kingdom, will terminate in the disgrace and ruin of those by whom it may be made; and that my people will find an ample reward for all their sacrifices, in an undisturbed enjoyment of that freedom and security which, by their patriotism and valour, they will have preserved and insured to themselves and their posterity."

The Lord Chancellor then, by his Majesty's command, prorogued the parliament to Thursday, the 6th of October. It was afterwards further prorogued until Tuesday the 22nd of November 1803, on which day it met for the dispatch of business.

END OF THE

PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE YEAR 1803.

FROM WHICH LAST-MENTIONED EPOCH IT IS CONTINUED DOWNWARDS

IN THE WORK ENTITLED,

"HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES."

Printed by T. C. Hansard, Peterborough-Court,
Fleet-Street, London.

Digitized by Google

PARLIAMENTARY WORKS.

THE following Works, which will be found peculiarly interesting and useful to every Member of Parliament, Statesman, and Lawyer, are in the course of Publication by Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy; Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown; J. M. Richardson; Black, Kingsbury, Parbury, and Allen; J. Hatchard and Son; J. Ridgway and Son; E. Jeffery and Son; J. Booker; Rodwell and Martin; R. H. Evans; Budd and Calkin; J. Booth; and T. C. Hansard.

I.—THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY OF ENGLAND, from the earliest period to the year 1803;—from which last-mentioned Epoch it is continued downwards in the Work entitled, "Hansard's Parliamentary Debates."

*** In the Edinburgh Review, No. 49, June 1815, p. 208, note, mention is made of this Work in the following words: "'The' (New) 'Parliamentary History.' We cannot quote this careful and judicious Collection without bearing testimony to its singular merits. It deserves, as well as the New Edition of the State Trials, to be numbered among the most useful and best conducted Works of late years. Both are indispensable parts of all collections of English History. To mention two such important Works, in a note on the review of so worthless a publication as that before us, may seem to be a treatment very unsuitable to their importance. The truth is, that it has long been intended to notice them more becomingly: that such an intention is far from being now relinquished; but that experience of the accidents which are apt to delay the execution of literary projects induces us to take the earliest opportunity of apprising all our readers of their great value."

II.—THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES, from the Year 1803, to the present time:—forming a continuation of the Work entitled, "The Parliamentary History of England from the earliest period to the Year 1803." Published under the superintendance of T. C. Hansard.

The Thirty-Ninth and Fortieth Volumes of this Work, containing the Proceedings in both Houses during the last Session, are ready for delivery. Complete Sets may still be had of the Publishers; but the Volumes containing the Debates of any particular Session, may be purchased separately.

*** All Communications for the Work, if forwarded to Mr. WRIGHT, No. 5, Panton Square, or to Mr. T. C. HANSARD, Peterborough Court, Fleet Street, will be carefully attended to.

Digitized by Google

III.—HOWELL'S STATE TRIALS,

In Royal 8vo. Price 1*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.* boards,

* Vol. XXVII, being the Sixth of the Continuation of

A COMPLETE COLLECTION OF STATE TRIALS and Proceedings for High Treason and other Crimes and Misdemeanors from the earliest Period to the Year 1783, with Notes and other Illustrations: compiled by T. B. HOWELL, Esq. F. R. S. F. S. A., with a Continuation to the present time by his son T. J. HOWELL, Esq.

The Cases comprised in this Volume are,

1. The Trial of James O'Coigley, Arthur O'Connor, Esq. John Binns, John Allen, and Jeremiah Leary, on an Indictment for High Treason: A. D. 1798.—[Continued from the preceding Volume.]

2—6. TRIALS for the IRISH REBELLION, viz. of Henry and John Sheares, Esqrs. Barristers; of John Mac Cann; of William Michael Byrne; of Oliver Bond, Merchant; and of Theobald Wolfe Tone, all for High Treason, A. D. 1798.

7. Trial of John Vint, George Ross, and John Parry, for a Libel on the Emperor of Russia, A. D. 1799.

8. Trial of John Cuthell, for publishing a Seditious Libel, A. D. 1799.

9. Trial of Gilbert Wakefield, Clerk, for a Seditious Libel, A. D. 1799.

10. Trial of an Action brought by Mr. Wright against Thomas Judkin Fitzgerald, Esq. High Sheriff of the County of Tipperary, for Assault and Battery, A. D. 1799.

11. Proceedings on an Information against the Right Hon. Sackville, Earl of Thanet; Robert Fergusson, Esq. Barrister at Law; Gunter Browne, Esq.; Dennis O'Brien, Esq.; and Thomas Thompson, Esq.; for a Riot and other Misdemeanors, A. D. 1799.

12. Proceedings in the Case of Benjamin Flower, Printer, on a Commitment by the House of Lords, for a Breach of Privilege, in publishing a Libel on the Bishop of Llandaff, A. D. 1799.

13. Trial of William Byrne, of Ballymanus Wicklow, Esq. on Charges of Rebellion and Murder, A. D. 1799.

14. Trial of John Tuite, otherwise Captain Fearnaught, for the Murder of the Rev. George Knipe, A. D. 1799.

15. Trial of John Devereux, junr. of Shilbeggan, Wexford, for Rebellion, A. D. 1799, 1800.

16. Proceedings in the Case of James Napper Tandy and Harvey Morris, Esqrs. attainted of High Treason, A. D. 1800.

17. Trial of James Hadfield, at the Bar of the Court of King's Bench, for High Treason, A. D. 1800.

The XXVIIIth Volume, being the Seventh of the New Series, is in the Press, and will contain

1. Trial of Hevey *v.* Sirr, for Assault and false Imprisonment, in Dublin, A. D. 1802.

2. Trial of Joseph Wall (commonly called Governor Wall), for Murder, A. D. 1802. [Now first published from the MS. Notes of Mr. Gurney.

3. Trial of Codling and others for destroying the Brig Adventure, A. D. 1802.

4. Trial of Ed. M. Despard (Colonel), for High Treason, A. D. 1803.

5. Trial of Jean Peltier, for a Libel on Buonaparté, A. D. 1803.

&c. &c. &c. &c. &c.

*** For the accommodation of such persons as possess Hargrave's State Trials, a separate Title-Page has been printed, so as to render the Continuation applicable to that as well as to the Octavo Edition. Thus, those who wish to possess the Modern State Trials as a separate Work, or as a Supplement to either of the Collections, may be provided with it accordingly.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

3 2044 106 509 615

Digitized by Google